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GADGETS / APPS / GEAR

PLUS SIZED

Sony's comeback kid, the Z3+ wows with its specs

ULTRA-LIGHT ULTRABOOKS

Apple's MacBook Air meets the Asus Zenbook UX305

TESTED

LG G4

Is it the best flagship snapper in the world?

★★★

RAMONA'S AFRICAN ADVENTURE

50 days through the heartland of Kenya like never before!

p41

STUFF'S GUIDE TO

GADGET SAFARI

AND CAPTURE THE WILD!

THE BEST WAY TO SEE

CONTEST WIN!

A HEADPHONE

BEYERDYNAMIC CUSTOM ONE PRO p90

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SCAN COVER

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Closed cockpit racer is a concept we want made!

THE NEW Q

Audi gives its best-selling SUV a once over for 2015

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WELCOME

We definitely love our gadgets. More than anything else? Perhaps. But that doesn't mean we don't like to push them to the limit in challenging environments. Especially in able hands. We strapped ex-MTV VJ-turned-intrepid traveller **Ramona Arena** to a selection of hand-picked toys that would help her cause. Her cause was, of course, to see **Kenya** (p41) the way it's supposed to be seen. In its entirety, and at its luxurious best. Her sojourn becomes our headlining feature this month and will help you plan your own trip better, hopefully.

There's the usual dosage of games, exclusive concepts and first tests in equal measure, but there's also something more in this issue. We take a look at the most awe-inspiring buildings in the world that aim not just higher (literally), but also push the boundaries of technology incorporated within them. These **Towers of Tech** (p67) will certainly give you a new perspective on the art of building buildings! We are also experimenting with **Blippar**, an augmented reality app that is available for free. Use it to see some of our pages come alive on your smartphone. Check it out and drop us a line. We're always keen on trying out new tech, if you haven't already noticed.

Nishant Padhiar, Editor / nishant@haymarketsac.com / twitter.com/nishantpadhiar

OUR LOGOS EXPLAINED...

The bearer of this accolade has gone up against its peer(s) and emerged victorious.

A gadget sporting this badge is a five-star product, and the one we would buy, if we were us.

...and a word about prices

Generally, we show the manufacturer's recommended price. Two exceptions:

- **Asterisk marked prices (*)** are indicative prices and subject to change depending on geographic location.
- All prices in the **Top 10s** are the best we could find at the time of printing.

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Outfit Dress- Babita Malkani
Earrings - Valliyan for Minerali
Ring - Minerali

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haymarket

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SUBSCRIBE NOW
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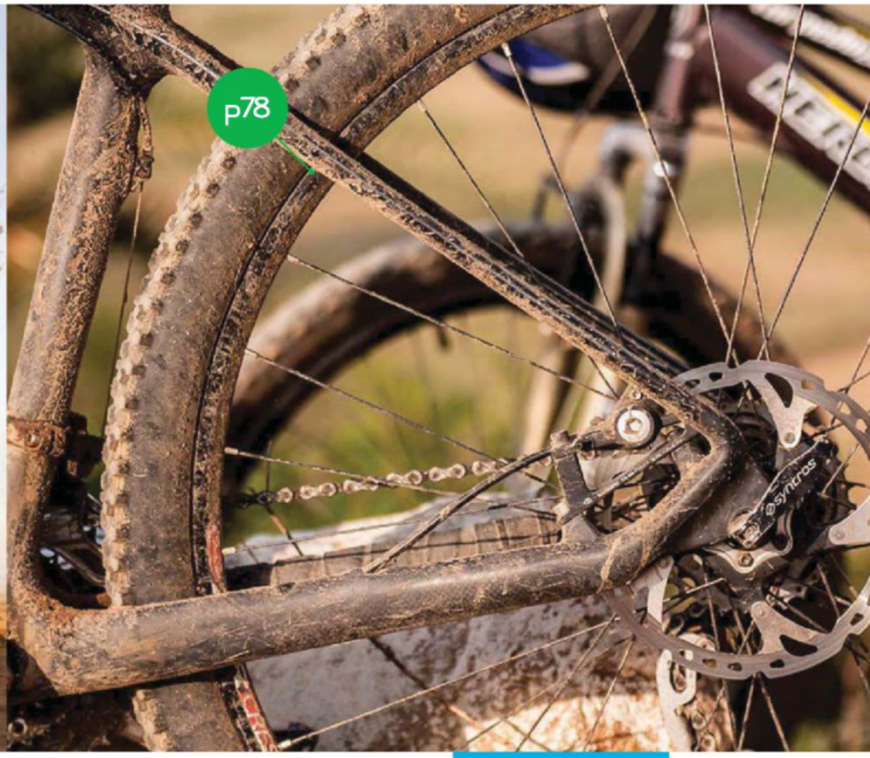

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TOP 10 OF EVERYTHING

Looking to buy something but need a bit of advice? Turn to our *Stuff* Top Tens: our expert listings of all gadgetry, from **p93**

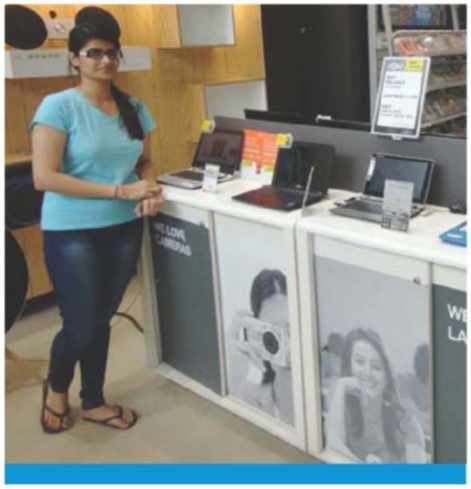
Apple MacBook Pro 13in (2015)
★★★★★
Top of its class
p103

ON THE GADGET TRAIL

High on the list of shoppers, Reliance Digital sees a huge amount of geek-traffic. We ask them what they love about the store...

Dilshad Khan
(IT Professional)

Reliance Digital is my favourite store as they have multiple brands and products, along with great display and their staff is extremely helpful. They have so many brands to choose from and for any product that I'm looking at, they have all the models and colours. In fact I just bought one and got at a much better price than what was offered online on other sites and I'm really happy with the guidance I got. That's one of the reasons I keep coming back.



Shruti Kapadia
(Financial Consultant)

This is in fact the first time i've come to this Reliance Digital store but I am pleasantly surprised as I was shown the exact model I was looking for and not "something close to it" like in other stores. It shall be my store of choice the next time too as the staff is doing a good job of helping me with the purchase decision based on many factors. I was looking for a laptop and all the variants including the colour options were available at the store, making it an even sweeter deal than I had anticipated.

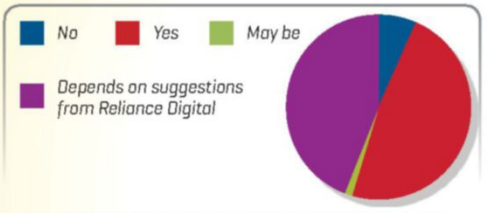
With over 45 different models of laptops on display, Reliance Digital is the go-to place for shoppers of every kind

Ashish
(Investment Banker)

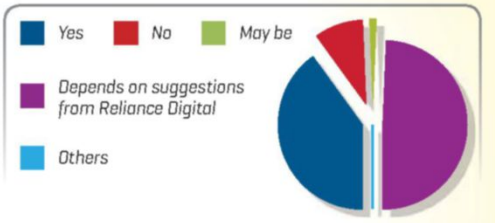
I like the ambience and the way the store is layed out, things are accessible inspite of the place always brimming with eager buyers. In addition, I am satisfied with the products they keep. I was looking for a laptop and some accessories and while I found the laptop, the staff made sure I was able to pick out the perfect accesories for it. If you are looking for a relatively new product, the Reliance Digital store definitely has it in stock, but what impressed me was the availability of slightly older products too.

THE CUSTOMERS VERDICT

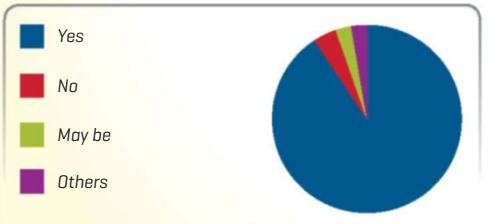
Have you already decided what you want to buy?



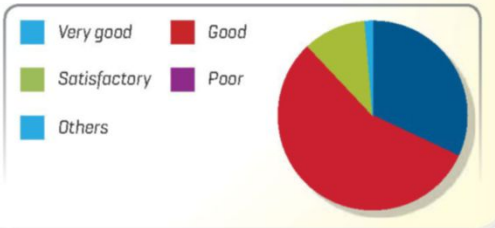
Any brand preferences?



Was the info/demo as per expectation, were all the features explained to you along with their corresponding benefits?



What is your feedback about the choice available at Reliance Digital?



RELIANCE DIGITAL EXPERT TIPS

What are your personal requirements in terms of what are you going to do with your laptop?

Before you head out to buy a laptop ask yourself, about what you will be using it for. Do you need it for gaming? Will you need it to work with a lot of office applications, will it support wireless printing? Will you be needing a laptop that supports playback of FullHD movies? You should also narrow down on what kind of specs you require. These include screen size, processor and memory configuration, multimedia capabilities and more. Also make sure that the laptop you plan to buy leaves enough room for you to upgrade in the future without much hassle. If you don't have the time to do the ground work yourself, then the best thing to do is walk into a Reliance Digital store and get all the personalized guidance you need from the experts.

What are the key-decision making points for you?

If you need a decent laptop for office work and very little multimedia consumption, look at a minimum of a 15 inch screen which will help as you work with spreadsheets and emails. However, if you need one for proper multimedia consumption or if you work with resource hungry applications, a 17 inch laptop will with a Core i7 based platform will work wonders. Opt for a blu-ray drive if possible as it will help you view Full HD movies, or while you work with applications such as Adobe Photoshop or 3D Max and more. Finally if you want a powerhouse for cutting edge 3D gaming, look at a 17inch laptop with the latest in graphics performance. The quality of your screen will matter so pay close attention when you buy.

What are the other aspects I should look at?

One of the things that you should keep in mind while buying a laptop are the other devices you may need to experience all the things your device can do. Be it Wi-Fi printers, Bluetooth speakers, dual band routers, cloud storage devices and more, you should look at getting a bundle deal. You should also check for extended warranty and service plans apart from other deals that may be of use to you.

How do I connect my laptop to a home theatre?

One of the simplest ways to connect your laptop to your home theater system is by directly connecting the audio out port (3.5mm) on the laptop to the AV in port on your home theater receiver. Newer laptops feature one or more HDMI ports, you can even use this port to connect to your AV receiver. For more information reach out to the resQ experts at the store.

At your resQ

How to enhance the performance of my laptop to its full potential?

- Gursceese K

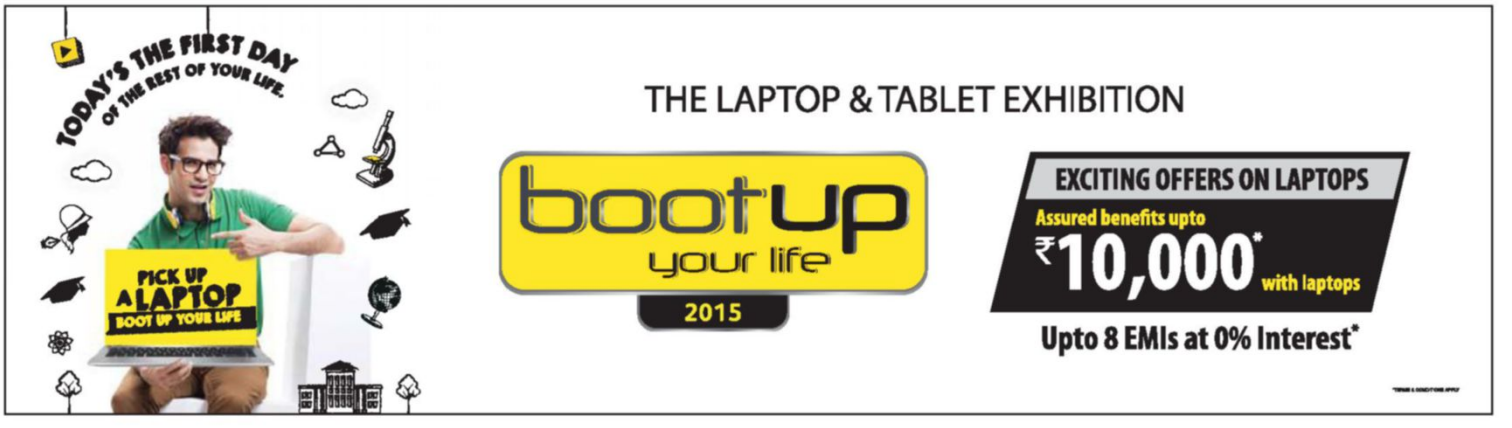
resQ experts help you with various performance optimization solutions that help you take complete advantage of your laptop. For instance you can transfer data from an old laptop to new one, install new apps, configure Wi-Fi, create recovery disk and more. Even your Cloud storage can be set up and synced. resQ experts also help you to connect your laptop to multiple devices such as your Home theatre, Camera, TV, printer and more to get the best experience of convergence. resQ experts also provide solutions to safeguard your home by connecting your laptops to security cameras which helps you to access your live camera feed from any internet connected laptop or mobile device.

What devices can be connected to a laptop and how would it benefit me?

- Amit Ajwani

You can connect your laptop to a TV, Projector or Home theatre to watch content from a laptop on a bigger screen for better experience. Also helps to browse internet on a bigger screen. You can even install and configure wired or wireless printing and that would help kids to take printouts for their assignments and project work. You can also print official documents such as PAN card or Passport copies when you need. You can also enable data transfer/sharing or streaming with mobile or tablet that will help you transfer your data or print your favourite e-books or cooking recipes anytime.

Reliance resQ



HOTST

TRAILBLAZING ON A SONY AFTERNOON

1 Water lot easier

A day-in-the-life montage of an Xperia user will see them breezily taking their waterproof phone into situations we'd be wary of. Cut to bedtime, though, and it's an unhappy face as they prise the cover off the USB port. No more! The Z3+'s USB socket is fully waterproof, but needs no cover.

2 LDAC's the way I like it

The Z3+ gets Sony's LDAC technology for better streaming of high-res audio (if you have LDAC-equipped Sony speakers) over Bluetooth. Sony says LDAC offers three times the wireless bandwidth of standard Bluetooth, and allows the Z3+ to stream to up to ten speakers at once.

UFF

20 PAGES OF THE BIGGEST STORIES FROM PLANET TECH

HOT FOUR #1

IT'S A FAIR COPPER

Sony Xperia Z3+

Copper is the new gold, they say. Who are 'they'? Probably the people who steal copper wiring out of motorway signs at night. Sony doesn't need to say it, for the Z3+ is backed by copper-colour anodised aluminium. It looks good, bolder than the truckload of fey golden phones currently doing the rounds. And there's black, white or a bluey-green if you disagree. But that 'plus' in the name signifies more than just new duds. Compared to the Z3, this is thinner (6.9mm), lighter (144g) and has a stronger Snapdragon 810 octa-core processor. The Xperia waterproofness is still in full effect, but now the microUSB port is rakishly uncovered. And the camera, while remaining largely unchanged physically, gets new software skills. The Auto mode, for example, now recognises up to 52 different photo-taking scenarios. Which sounds like more scenarios than we ever find ourselves in, even with a stylish copper-coloured phone as our ticket.

As hot as... watching *The Towering Inferno* in a hot bath

₹ tba / sonymobile.com

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HOT FOUR #2

GET A DRINK FOR DOM

MSI GT72 2QD Dominator

You are that gamer who aches to fight with the boss monster on expert level. You know LAN parties better than you know your little brother and many high-end consoles may come and go, but you will remain true to your cause of PC gaming. The MSI GT72 Dominator gaming laptop is for such hardcore PC gaming purebreds. Apart from the fancy backlit keypad, under the hood there is a wallop of firepower to blow your opponent to smithereens at the highest graphics settings possible. Your time to dominate, is now.

As hot as... bolts from the plasma gun in the upcoming Doom game

from ₹1,46,000 / in.msi.com

Interactive page

1 Where's my key?

A major part of gaming comes down to the mouse and keypad combination you use. The Dominator sorts you out on that front with a Steelseries full colour LED back light keypad for that perfect feedback. Every single time you hammer down on it.

2 Power tripping

There will come a time when this powerful laptop too will seem slow to you, thanks to its replaceable MXM graphics module. You won't be crying tears of blood. Simply switch the older board to a newer and more powerful one in minutes. Yeah?

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INNOCEAN-056/15

HOT FOUR #3

GAME OF DRONES

3DR Solo

Us humans are becoming progressively lazier. At least some of us. Which is why we would love to have refrigerators that serve food to us and clothes that magically crawl on to us at the snap of a finger. Snap back to reality for a second and you might not find either on your favourite website to order. However, what you will find is a new drone that will auto take-off, land at your command. It will even orbit you as you bite into that piece of bacon for an epic Instagram video. Oh, if you ever get dragged for a biking trail by your enthusiastic friends, the 3DR Solo will happily follow you. So go ahead, get your lazy on.

As hot as... an orbit video at the tip of an active volcano with you standing at its very edge

₹tba / 3drobotics.com

Interactive page

There you go, you control freak

This is the controller through which you shall receive your HD feed, from more than a kilometre away, you brave person. The adjustable arm can fit most smartphones and even an iPad Mini. All flight information is gorgeously displayed and the joystick offers haptic feedback.

helio | X10

World's first 2K support with 64-bit LTE True Octa-core™ SoC

MEDIATEK
everyday genius
True8Core

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Vivid, fluid and responsive display

Professional-quality photos and videos with instant focus and super slow motion

Extreme speed and connectivity

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- Hi-fidelity, iPhone5-class audio quality, achieving 110dB SNR & 90dB THD
- Higher than retina-resolution, Quad-HD (2560x1440) @ 60fps display support

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- 64-bit Octa-core running up to 2.2GHz and features the company's CorePilot™
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  - High-end performance GPU, clocked at up to 700MHz
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Networking

- LTE/UMTS/TD-SCDMA/EDGE Modem Integrated
  - FDD/TDD LTE R9 Cat-4 (150Mbps/50Mbps)
  - DC-HSPA+ R8 (42Mbps/11Mbps)/TD-SCDMA Rel.7 (2.8/2.2 Mbps)
- Support Wi-Fi 11ac/BT/FM/GPS/Glonass/Beidou/ANT+

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HOT FOUR #4

NIFTY 50

Canon EOS 5DS R

When you are out and about trying to get that perfect shot, you need a camera that's up to the job. That Nilgiri Marten is not going to show up multiple times as you wild it out. Which is why you need the new Canon EOS 5DS R which sports a whopping 50.6MP sensor with a Low Pass Filter effect cancellation feature that ensures stunning details are captured and retained every single time you snap a picture. The 61-point high-density reticular AF executes lightning-quick auto-focus manoeuvres and if you are lucky to spot that animal for a longer time, go on and record it in Full HD glory.

As hot as... snapping Christina Hendricks casually strolling through the wilderness

₹2,65,995 (body only) / canon.co.in

GIGAPIXEL

The bigger picture in tech

SLICKER SPEEDSTER

Almost like an ode to the fallacy that Formula One cars will look "shockingly ugly" with a closed cockpit, Dutch designer Andries van Overbeeke names his series of concepts 'Echoes of a nearby future'. A design study that uses McLaren Honda, Red Bull and Williams F1 cars as the base for dreaming up future racing cars is as awe-inspiring as the sport once used to be. Rooted in reality, the aerodynamic and mechanical specifications of this concept can actually make Formula One more exciting again, with more overtaking manoeuvres being possible (thanks to the simpler front wing), more safe (closed cockpit so Felipe Massa can drive fearlessly again) and definitely sexier (just look at it!) Let's just hope it's cheaper to manufacture too. Blipp it and check it out!

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NEWS FEED

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Big brother worthy

TP-LINK NC200 CLOUD CAMERA

It would be quite unfit to refer to this device as a simple webcam. Just look at what's on offer – a three-step policy of connect-register-view and an easy installation through the tp link portal, picture-taking or video-recording options on your smartphone after syncing it with the tpCamera app (for Android and iOS), a motion detection feature that can send email alerts, support 300Mbps wireless connection and also act as a Wi-Fi signal extender, 4X digital zoom and finally, a built-in microphone! C'mon! This is exactly what we'd invest in, should Orwell's future come knocking.

₹5999 / tp-link.in

Chinese maal: redefined

PHICOMM PASSION 660

There are some interesting facts about the slew of Chinese smartphone makers hitting the market. A, highly underrated fact is that it's hilarious to watch people try and pronounce the exotic brand names. General mirth aside, the fact remains that the new kids on the block are indeed strong contenders. Take the 4G capable, dual SIM Passion 660 from Phicomm, for instance. It features 1.5GHz Octa Core Qualcomm Snapdragon 615 chipset, 5in FHD display, 2GB RAM, 16GB memory, 13MP and 5MP rear front snappers with 2300mAh battery running Android 4.4.4. Chinese *maal*? Update the inference already.

₹10,999 / amazon.in

Indian-roadfriendly

FIREFOX RAZOR 26 D

This 'mountain bike' is perfect for our Indian roads, the rocky (bumps and/or speed breakers) and subterranean (potholes) characteristicsproviding the perfect platform for a cyclist trying to simply get about. The 21-speed Razor 26 D boasts features like front disk brakes, Alloy 36H Double Wall Rims wheels and chubby 26 X 2.10in tyres among others to take on the nastiest bumps and nuzzles from our roads. Available in black and parrot-green colour option, we suggest you go for the Bollywoodish latter; we're Govinda country, after all.
₹15,360 / firefoxbikes.com

More the merrier

HTC ONE E9+ DUAL SIM

We as a nation want more #fact. More is always merrier, IS our motto. Look at our 10-billion-plus population for further clarification. We've no doubts that HTC played it smart by following up on the launch of the One M9+ with a dual SIM variant. This smartphone's insides remain essentially the same, i.e., 5.5in 2K display, 2GHz Octa Core MediaTek chipset, 3GB RAM, 32GB memory, 20MP rear snappers, 2800mAh battery running on Android 5.0 and the works. The seemingly lightweight form factor and the obvious second SIM (regular kind) capacity remarkably distinguish the two. Go on, be merry in colour options of Meteor Grey, Gold Sepia and Rose Gold.
₹36,790 / htc.com/in

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THERE'S A TIME AND A... STEEL?

Pebble Time, Pebble Time Steel

from ₹17,500 / getpebbleinindia.com

The Pebble is back with a brand new mission. No, wait... two new missions!

First there was Pebble.
With an operating system that could work with any phone, an E Ink screen that gave it monster battery life and a low price, the Pebble was Kickstarter's first mega-hit. It raised its US$100,000 goal in two hours and went on to raise over $10m. Over a million Pebbles have now been sold.

Then they reinvented the Pebble Steel.
The Steel wasn't that different on the inside, but with a metal body and Gorilla Glass screen, it gave watch fans something a bit more dressy to strap on.

Then it was Pebble Time.
Recently, an entirely new watch was announced. Now there's a colour screen, but it's still e-paper, so the battery lasts a hearty seven days. It's 20% thinner than the Steel, but it keeps the metal bezel and Gorilla Glass screen. The Timeline UI organises your calendar events, texts and other info into a scrollable list, rather than single notifications. Team Pebble decided to return to Kickstarter to launch it and unsurprisingly, it set a whole bevy of new records: half a million in 17 minutes, $1m in under an hour, $10m in 48 hours. The Apple Watch will make more on its opening weekend, but costs between two and 55 times as much.

And then there was Pebble Time Steel.
Later in the same month, Pebble Steeled-up the Time. This US$250 version comes in silver, black or gold (coloured stainless steel), with both a metal and a leather strap. It's 1mm thicker than the Time but has 10 days of battery life – and if you've preordered a Time but now decide you fancy the swanky version, you can upgrade your order.

OPEN-SOURCE, AFFORDABLE AND WITH A 10-DAY BATTERY, IT COULD GIVE APPLE'S WATCH NIGHTMARES

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TP-LINK brings you the Next generation contest

4 Lucky winners get a chance to win **TP-LINK Router (Archer C20)** or **TP-LINK Powerbank (TL-PB10400)** each.

HOW TO ENTER

Answer the questions below and win:

What is the 'fastest' wireless technology?
A) IEEE 802.11AC
B) IEEE 802.11N
C) IEEE 802.11G

Which 4G router TP-LINK is going to launch this July?
A) TP-LINK M5360
B) TP-LINK M5250
C) TP-LINK M7350

How many antennas does TP-LINK D9 AC1900 have for high performance connectivity?
A) 01
B) 03
C) 02

Which of the below mentioned feature you can use to access the TP-LINK Archer C20 router through your iOS or Android devices?
A) Bluetooth
B) Tether App
C) Hotspot

HURRY! COMPETITION CLOSES JULY 21 2015

Product Highlights: TP-LINK Router (Archer C20)
- Supports 802.11ac - the next generation of Wi-Fi, compatible with 802.11n
- Tether App – TP-LINK Tether provides the easiest way to access and manage the router on your iOS and Android devices
- Simultaneous 2.4GHz 300Mbps and 5GHz 433Mbps connections for 733Mbps of total available bandwidth
- 2 external antennas provide stable omnidirectional signal and superior wireless coverage

Product Highlights: TP-LINK Powerbank (TL-PB10400)
- 10400mAh of capacity
- Dual USB ports let you quickly charge two devices simultaneously
- Compatible with 5V input USB-charged devices like iPhones, iPads and Android smartphones
- More than 500 recharge cycles over the life of the battery

Ways to participate:

stuffcontest@haymarketsac.com with the subject line **'TP-LINK Contest'**

/stuffindia Share the TP-LINK contest tab on your facebook page.

For more information, visit tp-link.in TP-LINK INDIA

Stuff India
CONTEST MANIA

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VS

It's bike o'clock somewhere
SEVENFRIDAY M2/02

Bikers are a breed apart. After all, it takes a special kind of nut to brave the elements and our traffic just for kicks. But you know, there are times when your trusty bike can't be by your side. For those occasions, there's always the SevenFriday M2/01. Sandblasted grey or polished rose-gold, a cast iron pattern, discs to show hours, minutes and seconds... Yup, just the kinda style a biker would love. So the next time you're stuck in a boring meeting, glancing at your wrist will actually make you feel better.
₹tba / sevenfriday.com

How many leagues under the sea?
BREITLING SUPEROCEAN CHRONOGRAPH M2000

Looking for the Loch Ness monster? Diving for pirate treasure in the Pacific? Better do it in style, 'cos you don't want to look like a mess when the world's press discovers your Indiana Jones-ish talents. And helping you do just that is this Breitling. Now available in a special edition, with a black and satin-look brushed steel finish that tells everyone they're in the presence of an experienced adventurer. And it's water resistant to 2,000 metres, which we're sure is quite a lot more than you'd ever need!
₹tba / breitling.com

merge into the internet-of-things
LYCOS LIFE WEARABLES

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from ₹3500 / lycos.life

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To locate the nearest Micromax Service Centre through SMS. Type ASC <space> City Pin code. Send this SMS* to 9212230707.

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VS

Spikes of glory

PUMA EVOSPEED CRICKET SPIKE 1.3

It's cricket season, and you know what that means – chugging down beer at a pub with the telly on, all the while dispensing plenty of gratuitous (and totally useless) advice to the players on the field. So you think you're the next master blaster? Prove it then! But don't forget to wear Puma's EvoSPEED cricket spikes as they might just save your blushes – made of lightweight microfiber and mesh, with a light-yet-rugged TPU outsole and a tough toe guard to prevent loudmouth blowhards from embarrassing themselves.

₹8999 / in.puma.com

Triple X

ADIDAS X15 FOOTBALL

Or perhaps cricket's not your thing, and you'd rather hand out your questionable wisdom to footballers. In that case, you might want to wear the Adidas X15, should you ever be called upon to disprove the heathens who refuse to believe in your expertise. Or shall we say 'X-pertise'? That's because the X15 has a 'triple-x' worth of stuff for the attacking player – traction from the X-Claw base, agility from the X-Cage construction, and comfort from the X-Skin. X-cellent? We really hope so.

from ₹3999 / adidas.co.in

Gaming? Sounds good

HP OMEN

Collaboration with stylish Danish audio pioneers Bang & Olufsen see the HP Omen with the kind of audio back up needed for gaming. The notebook possesses a segment-defying 19.9mm thickness and weighs 2.12kg. Lock and load with an inbuilt Nvidia GeForce GTX 960M 4GB gaming graphics card, Intel Core i7 Quad Core processor along with 15.6in Full HD. That, along with cool customisable options which include altering the keyboard back-light to six programmable function keys just might be your ticket out of newb-ville.

₹1,59,990 / hpshopping.in

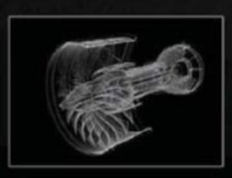
msi®

MSI recommends Windows.

Dynaudio
To satisfy consumers desire to experience high quality sound effects, MSI partnered with top audio brand Dynaudio, which has a devoted aspiration for "Authentic Fidelity" to meet this demanding standard.

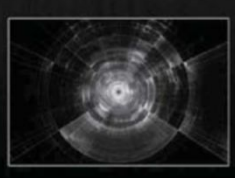
Steelseries
Exclusive keyboard positioning and golden triangle layout offers a better gaming experience.

TRUE FIREPOWER



Cooler Boost 3 with Dual Fan Thermal Cooling System

The Cooler Boost 3 dual thermal system is made for next generation extreme performance CPU and graphics. With advanced cooling efficiency, it doesn't increase any extra space but lower noise. The heat been generated by core components transferred to the vent quietly without troubling users.



Super RAID 2 - Stunning Storage Speed

Super RAID 2 design gives the storage performance up to 1500MB/s storage performance, the reading, writing and saving speeds is 15x faster than a single 750GB 7200rpm HDD.

GE62 Apache

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₹14,00,000 / vertu.com

Portable eargasm inducers

FIIO X3 SECOND GEN

Boy are we glad that the world is waking up to the beauty of high resolution music. And so now you've got your high resolution music bank sorted and now you wonder about a high resolution player worth the pocket. Fret no. FiiO's been doling out impressive portable high resolution players for different price ranges. Sure it's no Astell&Kern but hey! it's definitely a performer. The mid-range X3 second gen now handles DSD decoding natively, and supports all of the popular lossless formats in your music library, including WAV, FLAC, APE, WMA, ALAC, and AIFF.
₹14,599 / fiio.net

Carry books, not the weight

AMAZON KINDLE PAPERWHITE

If you love books but don't fancy being a beast of burden, then the Kindle from Amazon is no stranger to you. Give the fine folks at Kindle a proverbial pat already. The latest Kindle, the Paperwhite, features a 330ppi display, Bookerly – a special font developed to facilitate reading on digital screens, improved character placement and other features that are custom-built for the on-the-go bibliophile. Nothing beats the feel of paper you say? Of course, why won't you love lugging books about, you hipster, you.
from ₹10,999 / amazon.in

Stuff India
CONTEST MANIA

MOVIE OF THE MONTH Contest

INOX
LIVE THE MOVIE

WRONG OR WRONGED ?

PANJIM: In a major break-through Goa police on Sunday detained Vijay Salgaonkar, a local cable operator, father of two, for alleged in the case of a missing boy. Sources said that the police team headed by the IG Meera Deshmukh do not have any concrete evidence against the suspect. The locals feel that Vijay Salgaonkar is being framed.

VIACOM18 MOTION PICTURES PRESENTS
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DIRECTED BY NISHIKANT KAMAT
PRODUCED BY KUMAR MANGAT PATHAK AJIT ANDHARE ABHISHEK PATHAK

• Catch it at **INOX, 31st July 2015** •

Question: Name the actress playing the role of IG Meera Deshmukh
Answer and win couple movie tickets!

HURRY CONTEST CLOSES JULY 21st 2015

Send in your entry to:

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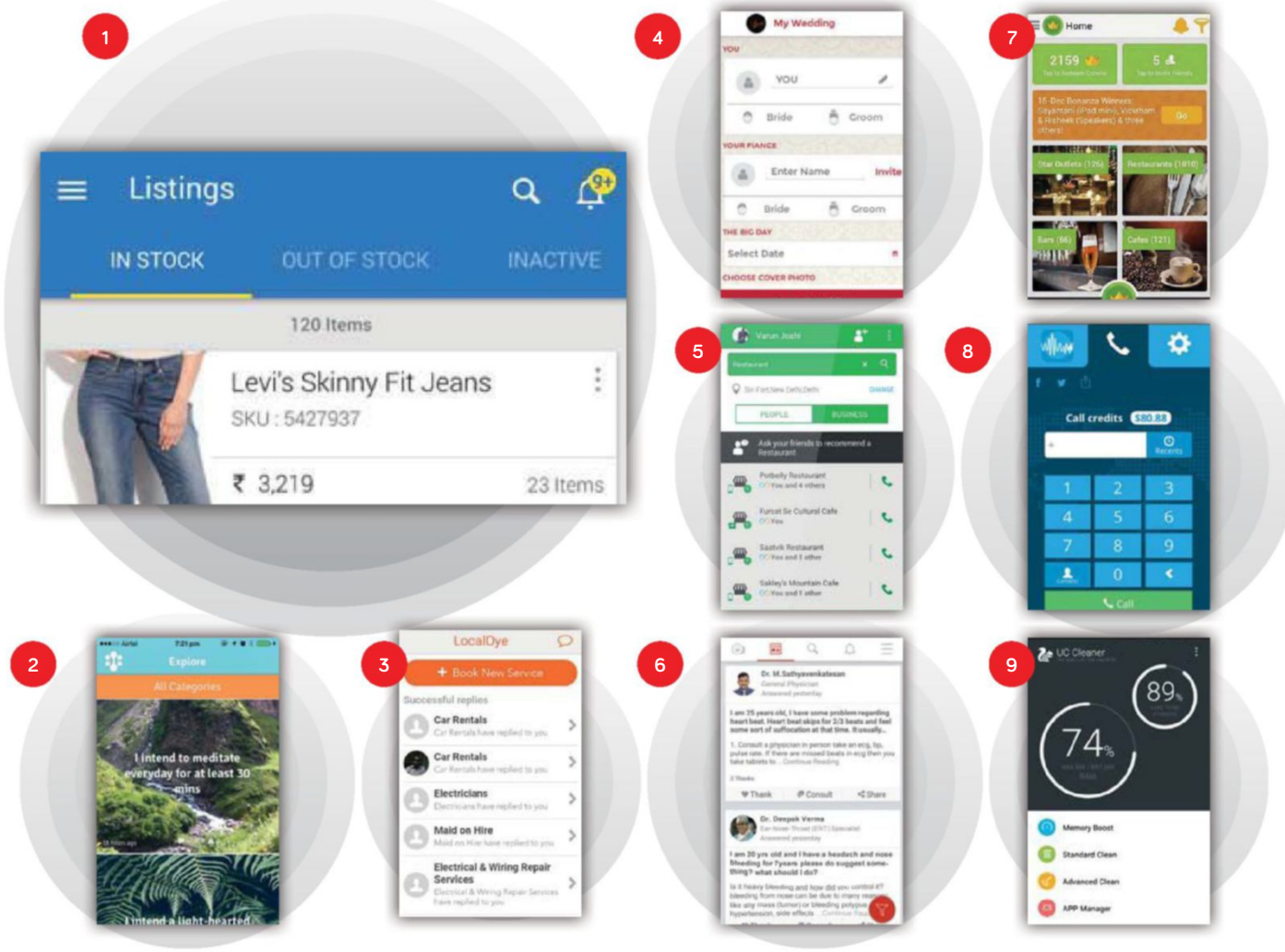
APPS

This month's mobile must-downloads



1 Flipkart Seller Hub

₹free / Android

Tired of listening to stories about Flipkart sending rocks to people? Join in on the fun and be a seller yourself! This new seller hub will help you manage and deliver those rocks like Santa delivers gifts to children on Christmas. Rock on.

2 Intent

₹free / iOS

The press release says Intent is a community where members can share their dreams and aspirations, and receive support from others. What's that? You aspire to eat Maggi! The community might not take that in well.

3 LocalOye

from ₹free / Android

Don't you just love how we keep finding apps that make life easy? Even if you don't, we surely do. With LocalOye on your phone, you won't need to run around looking for a plumber or other services when required. Let the app do it.

4 Shaadi Saga

₹free / Android

Probably the Candy Crush of the *shaadi* world, Shaadi Saaga lets you plan and execute your wedding. Invite guests, collect *shaadi* photos from them and do a bunch of other fun stuff. We're sure it'll do a better job than a professional wedding planner.

5 Caller ID Details

₹free / Android

A friend in need is a friend in, umm, Toost? Yes, and that's because Toost does what LocalOye does, but can be trusted a bit more because it assists in finding local services used by your friends. There are recommendations too.

6 Lybrate

₹free / Android, iOS

A hypochondriac's dream come true, Lybrate aims to connect patients with doctors. The poor (not literally) doctors have to answer questions that patients can ask while remaining anonymous for free, free, free, free, free, free, free...

7 Crown-it

₹free / Android

Eat, pay, get part of what you pay back, repeat. The cashback you get, you can spend on other services like talktime, online shopping, movie tickets, donations to charity and much more. But we would use it to eat more food.

8 GV Call

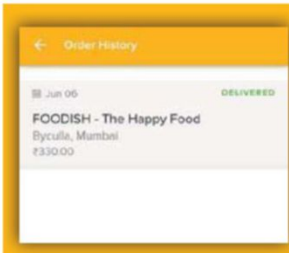
from ₹free / Android, iOS

Global Voice is a Norwegian telecommunication company that wants you to call all your rich uncles abroad so that they can send you gifts. Don't worry, it won't cost much and won't even require your house Wi-Fi.

9 UC Cleaner

₹free / Android

Remember those attempts that your phone's browser made to download a certain 'UC Browser' when you visited a shady site? Well, those folks have made a cleaner that is light on your phone, is ad-free and cleans it thoroughly.



APP SPOTLIGHT
ZOMATO ORDER

₹free / Android, iOS

Following the grounded footsteps of TinyOwl, this food menu juggernaut doesn't want you to just look for restaurant menus on its brilliant site, but also wants you to order through its brilliant app. You get location-based recommendations of restaurants and can have food delivered to you by just prodding at your screen. Pay by card and then all you need to do is go to your door, take delivery and start eating.

Stuff.tv/in

Live. Now.
www.stuff.tv/in

Tech-asana

LENOVO YOGA 3 PRO

Looks like Lenovo's taken a leaf out of yoga with the sleek and pro-contortion Yoga 3 Pro. It features Intel Core processor, 8GB RAM, 512GB SSD and 13.3in Gorilla glass display running Windows 8.1. The yoga bit is in the way the 1.19kg hybrid can bend over backwards, courtesy of the snazzy watchstrap-inspired hinges that allow various viewing angles, including a 180-degree bend that turns it into a laptop. Please don't try doing that, at home or otherwise.
₹1,15,990 / thedostore.com

Tokyo drift, on the couch

LOGITECH G29 DRIVING FORCE

Compatible with the PS3 and PS4, live out your dreams of drifting, racing and making up for your terrible driving skills with the G29 Driving Force gear. With an anti-backlash helical gearing, hand-stitched leather-wrapped rim and stainless steel throttle, brake and clutch pedals, cop a feel of the virtual real-deal from the inbuilt dual-motor force feedback transmission, without the consequences of being maimed, injury or good 'ol death. Navigate through the game with the D-Pad, console buttons that are ergonomically placed on the wheel itself. Go on, you proud couch surfer, you! Live your long-cherished dream of being a speed demon.
₹34,995 / gaming.logitech.com

Pout-capturer pro

SONY XPERIA C4

Selfie is a live and thriving movement that pushed even smartphone manufacturers to up their selfie-cam (front camera for the uninitiated) game. Case in point: Sony's Xperia C4, claimed as the next gen 'Pro selfie' smartphone by the company. It features a 5.5 FHD display, 1.7GHz Octa Core chipset, with a 2GB RAM and 16GB memory running Android 5.0 with a 2600mAh battery. The rear and front cameras are 13MP and 5MP each. Now available in black, white and vibrant mint colour options.
₹24,490 / sonymobile.com/in

ON A MISSION TO FIND A MASTER.

ILLUMINATION PRESENTS

minions

JULY 10 IN 3D & 2D

ILLUMINATION ENTERTAINMENT

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Stuff India www.stuff.tv/in

Far-sighted snapper

IBALL MSLR COBALT4

It's tough to click pictures of things that are far off with pretty much any smartphone. We get it. iBall's mSLR Cobalt4 just doesn't. Why would it? Sure, it's got a 5.5in QHD display, 1.4GHz Octa Core chipset, 1GB RAM and an 8GB memory, a 3.2MP front camera with flash, running on Android 4.4 with a 2000mAh battery. But that's not why. The reason is the different lenses (zoom, fisheye, macro and wide angle lenses) that give the 8MP rear camera some serious juice, and these come with the phone. Just don't try a selfie with them on. Just saying.
₹8499 / iball.co.in

QUICKTEST

BlackBerry Leap

₹21,490 / in.blackberry.com

Yay, new BB. Sigh...
BlackBerry nevers fails to excite us and then get our hopes down over and over again. While its earlier phones were stellar examples of brilliant amalgamation of the right hardware and software, the same cannot be said of its current crop of smartphones. Think about the Z10, Z30, Z3, if you need a memory refresh and while the Passport stood out, it was an awkward size and the phone didn't really make a massive impact in the market.

Late to the party?
That brings us to BlackBerry's latest smartphone, christened the 'Leap'. It looks and feels rather similar to the Z3, offers good build, and is comfortable to hold thanks to a grippy exterior. The 5in HD display packs in 294ppi and does well as you view HD videos on it. However, for the hefty price at which the phone is offered, we do expect a wee bit more. Phones priced around the ₹10K mark offer quad-core processing but BlackBerry has chosen to stick with its good old friend - the 1.5GHz dual-core Qualcomm SnapDragon processor. The 2GB of built-in RAM memory does help as you surf the web or work with emails and office applications, but overall, when you open multiple apps, you can feel the system struggle for air.

Be Bold...
BB10 OS 10.3.1 is easy to work with once you spend a bit of time working it. Yet, it simply does not have the breadth of Android or the simplicity and intuitive nature of iOS.

Will it take great panoramic shots?
We were hoping for a better camera with the Leap, but weren't too happy with the results. While daylight shots out in the open are well captured with decent colour detail, the moment you move indoors, you will have to deal with detail loss and noise. It gets much worse as you shoot in low-light.

BB needs more grunt...
To sum up, the BlackBerry Leap has a few things that are genuinely useful. For example, you can upgrade storage space from the stock 16GB to much more by plonking in a 128GB microSD card via the expandable memory slot. The phone is easy to work with on a daily basis, thanks to its proportions. However, when one is asked to pay ₹21,490 for a phone that does not offer a Full HD screen, Quad-Core CPU and a decent camera, in this day and age when the market is flooded with good phones that do, it becomes that much harder to stay a BlackBerry loyalist or even become a first time BB user. BB10 OS does the job of being a good OS, but does nothing enticing that will have Android or iOS users dump their phones and shift to the BlackBerry ecosystem. The new BlackBerry Leap is a phone we will simply skip there is just too much better choice out there.

Stuff says ★★★☆☆
BlackBerry's new phone tries hard to impress but falls short in the wake of competition

INGENI-O-METER ●●●●● One of the most mind-boggling things seen on film

I MADE THIS

A SUPERMASSIVE BLACK HOLE

Interstellar's VFX chief Paul Franklin on building a deep-space monster

The more I learned about the black hole, the weirder it became. It's more outlandish than anything in any fantasy film about magic or the supernatural that I've ever worked on.

Interstellar is about a group of astronauts who travel to a distant galaxy where, instead of a star at the heart of the system, there's a supermassive black hole with 100 billion times the mass of our sun.

A black hole is what happens when a huge star dies. The fires of nuclear fusion are no longer burning so it collapses, becoming denser and denser until it forms an infinitesimally small point with infinite density. Its gravity is so strong that nothing can escape, not even light, so you end up with this black sphere floating in space.

All the surrounding gas and dust spirals into the black hole, speeding up until it's travelling at almost the speed of light, so there's also a belt of gas, like the rings of Saturn, but glowing.

We didn't want the audience to think, 'Oh, this is the computer-generated bit'. We wanted them to think, 'Wow, they went out and filmed a black hole!'

Professor Kip Thorne from Caltech is one of the world's leading experts on black holes, and a close colleague and friend of Stephen Hawking. Kip gave us the maths, then the computer scientists here at Double Negative were able to turn his numbers into software that created images of the black hole. So when you see the black hole in the film, it's created by real physics.

The biggest challenge was creating the level of detail for the IMAX format, which offers something like 10 times the resolution of your HD TV. If the images are noisy, if anything is wrong, there's nowhere to hide. To make images that big, we have a 'render farm' of 20,000 nodes, each equivalent to a very fast desktop PC. It still took over 100 hours to render each individual frame. We ended up with over 800TB of data; it was, as we say in visual effects, 'non-trivial'.

At one point the astronauts travel through a wormhole, and we were able to create the interior according to the physics that Kip gave us – but it was, frankly, like you were going through some mad, psychedelic hall of mirrors. It's amazing, but you have to remember it needs to make sense to a large audience.

We even discovered something new in the process. Our simulated black hole is immense, and it's rotating at nearly the speed of light; a thing that huge, spinning that fast, warps the space around it, like putting your finger on a napkin and twisting. This produces a very complex, very beautiful pattern at the edge of the event horizon; Kip said this had never been seen before, because no-one had ever tried visualising a black hole as if they were floating near it with a camera. We'd discovered a new level of detail in the structure around a black hole.

So, with Kip, we co-authored a scientific paper for the Institute of Physics' journal, *Classical And Quantum Gravity*. I never thought my career as a filmmaker would involve publishing a peer-reviewed scientific paper.

I'm all for the unification of art and science. Science reveals truth, and artists interpret it; they're two sides of the same coin.

"WE DISCOVERED NEW DETAILS IN THE STRUCTURES AROUND BLACK HOLES"

INTERSTELLAR: DOING THE MATHS

Router revamped

D-LINK DIR-890L ROUTER

When you have a router that looks more at home on a Predator spaceship, you can't help but feel the fanboy in you gloat with joy, Predator-style, of course. Claimed to deliver speeds of up to 3.2Gbps, the multiple antennae help boost coverage. A drag-and-drop UI that helps prioritise apps and devices, tri-band Wi-Fi (two 5GHz and one 2.4GHz), media sharing options and other features make this beast with a 1GHz Dual Core heart something of a beast. Now available in colour options of red and black with a three-year warranty. Let the downloads and streaming festivities begin!
₹18,500 / dlink.co.in

Crossover bonanza

DAILYOBJECTS 'COMICS COLLECTION' PHONE CASES

We love crossovers – outcome of two genres, giving reverence to both while being singular in entity. What are we going on about? Why, smartphone cases, of course! But not cases that simply protect your phones. Please, that's so passé. Check out the Comics Collection of cases from Daily Objects. Bale's American Psycho meets Kiss? Check. Dark Knight's Joker meets Clockwork Orange? Yep. And, they're available for iPhone 5/5S, 6, 6Plus and Samsung Note 4 models with over 50 designs to choose from. Told you crossovers are fun. Just ask Caitlyn Jenner.
from ₹1499 / dailyobjects.com

Click enhancer

GIONEE ELIFE E8

Gionee is the Chinese equivalent of the Parsi slang 'Jow ni' (which translates to 'look at this!'). Yes we're kidding. But the feature-packed dual SIM Elife E8 isin't and it definitely warrants a double-take. The smartphone packs a WQHD 6in display, 2GHz Octa Core MediaTek MTK6795 chipset, 3GB RAM, 64GB memory, running on Android 5.1 with a 3520mAh battery. The rear camera is an impressive 24MP, and, there's an 8MP selfie-snapper on the front. Watch out for the Indian launch in July.
₹tba / global.gionee.com

FIRST PLAY PAYDAY 2: CRIMEWAVE EDITION PS4, Xbox One

Robbing a bank, like attempting a loop-the-loop around the Golden Gate Bridge in a jumbo jet, is one of those things best done in a virtual world.

So if *GTA V*'s online heists have given you a taste for co-op criminality, *Payday 2*'s next-gen debut, the *Crimewave Edition*, is for you. It has more than 20 DLC packs plus slightly spruced-up graphics. You won't stop to look at the scenery, but that's for the best as you'll often have entire strike teams on your tail.

As part of a four-person team you take on robberies that vary in complexity and difficulty, from the relatively simple task of knocking off a security van in an upmarket town square, to liberating a crashed money train of its stash by burning a hole through the carriage and pumping the safe full of water in order to pop it open.

Completing a job is unlikely to ever be a case of simply walking in, pocketing the cash and waltzing out to a waiting getaway vehicle. More complicated jobs require proper teamwork in order to keep the cops at bay and control any hostages while you get to the loot. And all that's rarely straightforward: *Payday 2* has more drills than an overly conscientious fire warden at MFS, and the damned things keep jamming.

Fortunately, your standard copper is lacking a little in the smarts department... but the more serious things get, the tougher and cleverer the boys in blue become, until you're up against SWAT teams with smoke grenades and heavily armoured one-man armies.

A SKATEBOARDING CLASSIC RETURNS

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 5

PS4, Xbox One, PS3, Xbox 360

For gamers of a certain vintage, the *Tony Hawk* games marked a golden age of console gaming, when multiplayer mode meant meeting up with real humans and passing the pad over a packet of Lays and some foreign lager.

So after months of Tony Hawk teasing it from behind his Twitter account, *THPS* is back – and the man himself promises a return to the classic OTT gameplay that made the series such a hit, albeit with an online twist.

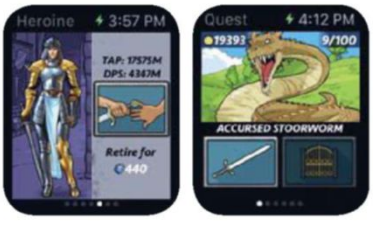
Players will be able to drop in and out of online skateparks to compete against skaters from around the world, linking together a preposterous number of tricks in some locations that look more than a little familiar. This being a *Tony Hawk* game you'll be able to take control of the Hawkmeister himself, or pick from a range of 'boarders who we're sure are a very big deal to some people, including Nyjah Huston, Aaron 'Jaws' Homoki, Lizzie Armanto and Tony's son Riley Hawk.

Curiously, the first set of screenshots suggest they've kept the graphics old-skool too, but we'll reserve judgement until we see it in action, probably sometime later this month.

STUFF PICKS APPLE WATCH GAMES

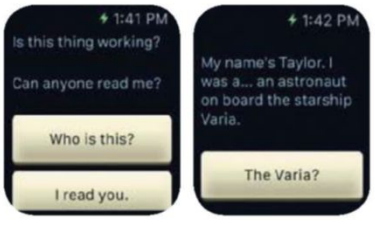
SPY_WATCH ₹120

If wearing a smartwatch doesn't already make you feel like 007, *Spy_Watch* should. You're the M of your own agency and a colleague will periodically contact you from the field for instructions, successful missions being rewarded with upgrades to your spy's skills. Just make sure you don't get mixed up with your normal texts and end up telling Mum to assassinate Dad.



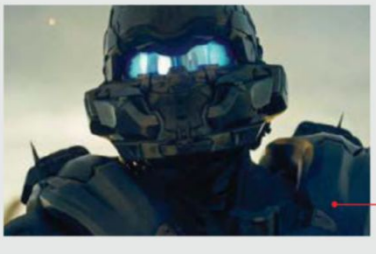
RUNEBLADE ₹free

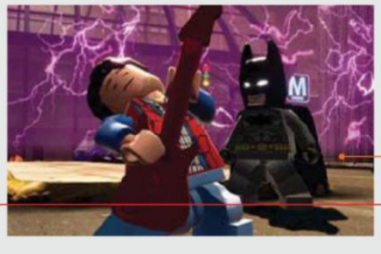
Runeblade boils down the battles of a full-on RPG to a few simple taps on the face of your Watch. With each monster you manage to slay you'll get some gold dubloons which can be spent on spells and used to boost your stats. It's no *Skyrim*, but you'll soon find yourself clocking on to defeat an accursed stoorworm or hexed wolf while you wait for the bus.



LIFELINE ₹190

Lifeline puts you in contact with a stranded spaceman. It all happens in real time, so you can play it as you go about your day. Sometimes he'll just need words of support, other times you'll need to Google something for him (3G is pretty weak in outer space), but if you don't find yourself genuinely caring about his fate, you're colder than the dark side of the moon.





INCOMING

THIS MONTH
- THE FLAME IN THE FLOOD

AUGUST
- MADDEN NFL 16

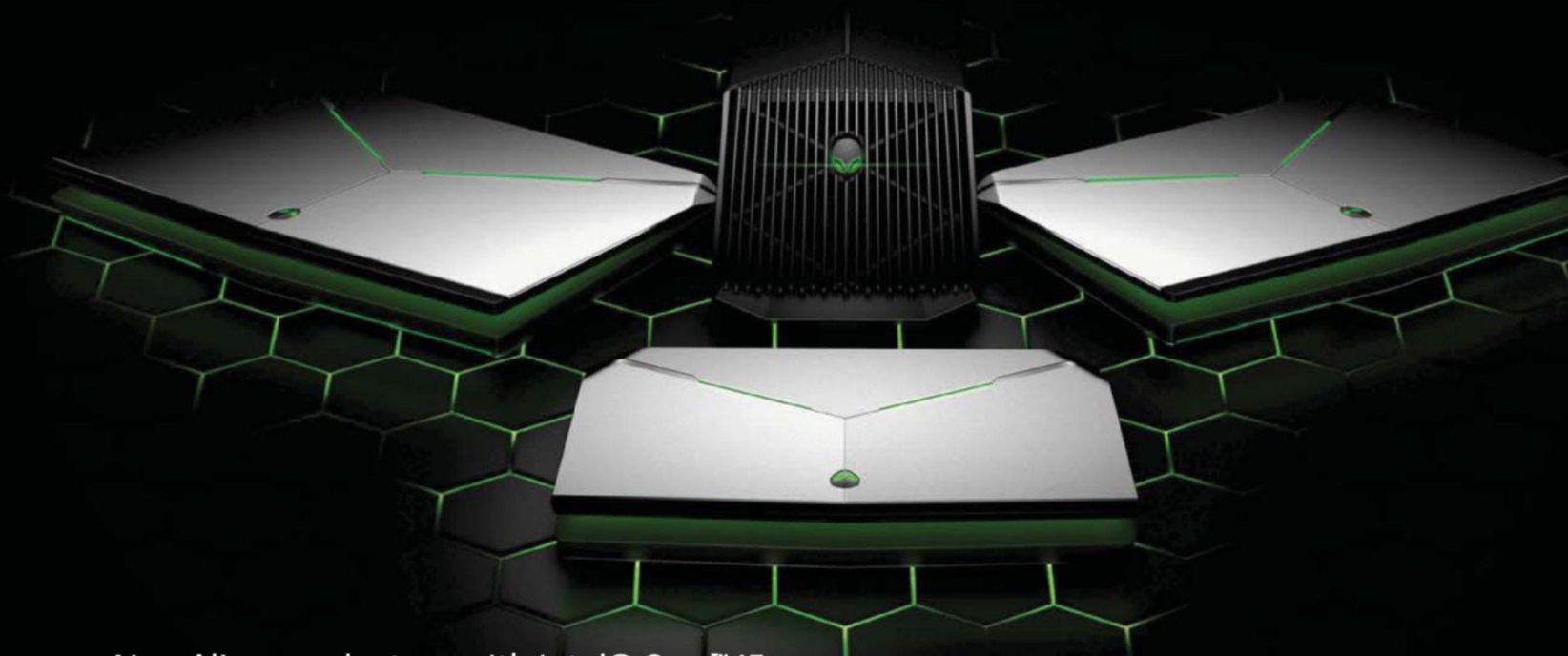
SEPTEMBER
- METAL GEAR SOLID 5: THE PHANTOM PAIN
- LEGO DIMENSIONS

OCTOBER
- HALO 5: GUARDIANS
- NEVERMIND

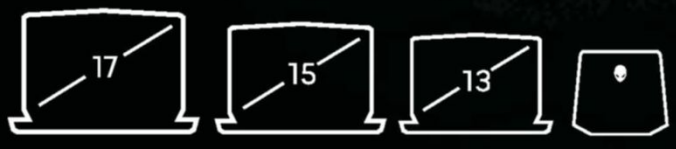
ALIENWARE

ALIENWARE 13,15&17

THE FUTURE STARTS NOW.



New Alienware laptops with Intel® Core™ i5 processors are here to usher in the next era of mobile gaming. Get full-throttle action anywhere, and with the optional Graphics Amplifier, truly intense at-home immersion.



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XPS 13

Better by any measure.

The smallest 13" laptop with world's first virtually borderless infinity display- amazing both inside and out.

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COMPUTING TOP TECH OF CES 2015

TOP PICK CES 2015 LAPTOP

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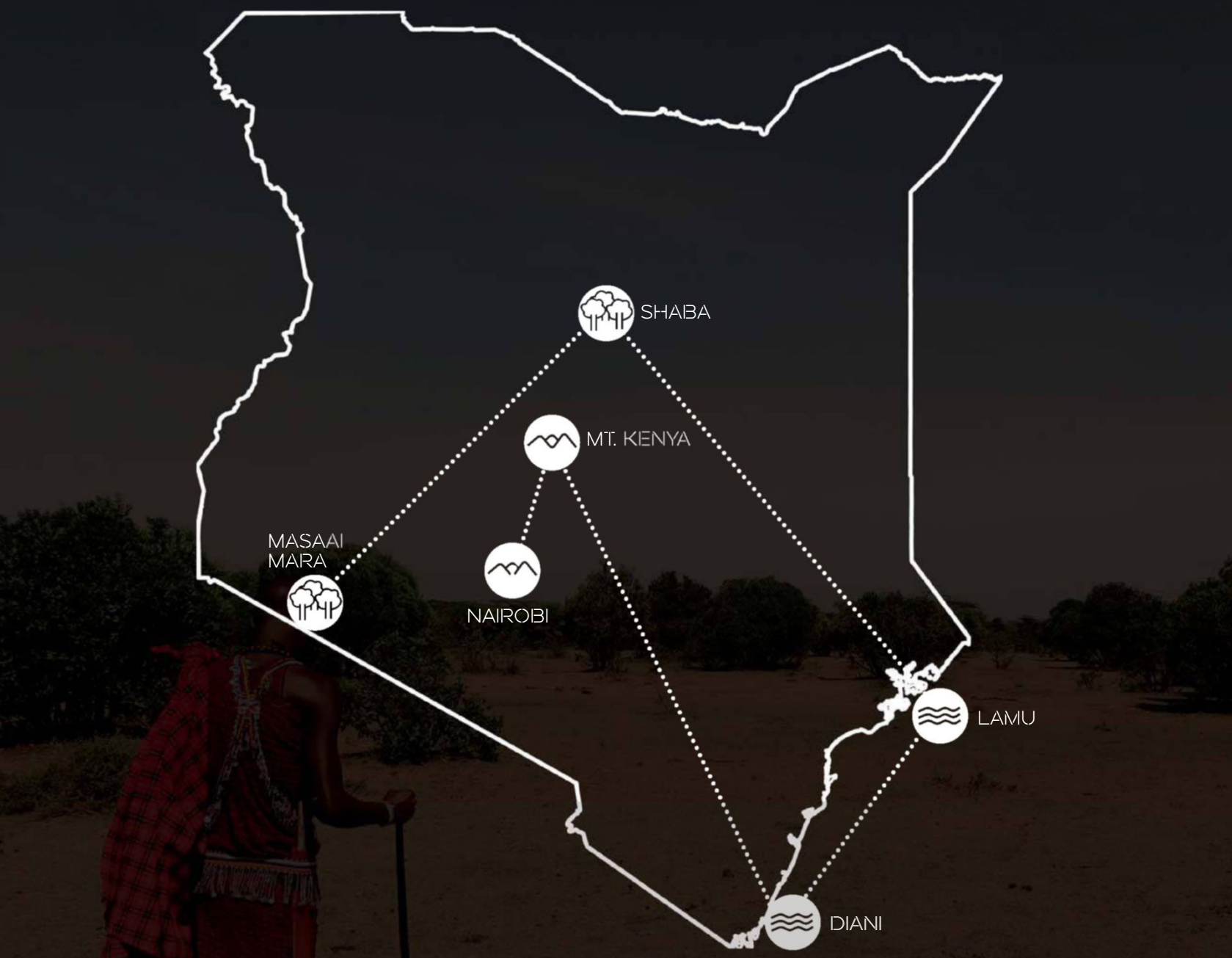


HOT ON THE TRAIL

The Shona people of Zimbabwe have a saying about wanderlust – "A new thing doesn't come to she who sits, but to she who travels". **Ramona Arena** decided to take this to heart and went to traverse Kenya on her own for 50 days. We decided to follow.

[**Words** Karan Lohan, **Design** Kritika Dayal]

THE HILLS HAVE HIGHS

The capital city of Kenya is the jump-off point to all the hills, beaches and jungles in the country. Nairobi's reputation precedes it but if you've lived in any of India's metros for a significant period of time, you'll feel right at home. The city overflows with energy and is a treasure trove of touristy delights – Karen Blixen Museum, Giraffe Centre and the obscenely adorable Elephant Orphanage. Feel like getting away from it all? Get a bike and head into the glorious Karura forest of Nairobi.

The name Kenya came from the Kamba tribe's name for Mount Kenya – *'Kinyaa'*. The tribes around the mountain still pray to it. Standing at 5199 metres with snow-covered peaks all year around, the mountain looks divine alright. The best part? It's just 150km from the capital city of Nairobi – hop into a taxi, listen to some *Toto* and four hours later, you'll be gazing up at the mountain, shivering slightly. The climate is typical equatorial, which translates to winter every night and summer every day. Temperatures fluctuate a lot, especially on the lower slopes, so definitely pack in a few extra layers. Despite having the heavy tag of Africa's Second Highest Peak, the mountain is relatively easy to climb. There are even some walking routes that take 2-3 days and give bragging rights for a lifetime.

TERN LINK C7

Lug a bike around in a jungle? How impractical. Oh, is it? This is no run-of-the-mill bicycle here. No sir, this here is the Tern Link C7. What makes this so special, you ask? Well, it folds. That's right. This full-sized bike folds neatly into a small package and is ready to take on the wilderness alongside its fearless rider. It weighs 12kg, has a folding time of 10 seconds and features a 7 speed Shimano shifter.
₹30,990 / haybren.com

LifeStraw
Nonprofits, seasoned hikers and mountaineers all swear by this little magic pipe which burst onto the global stage 10 years ago. It's a 310mm portable water filter that removes 99.9% of waterborne parasites; you can stick LifeStraw in any pond, river or lake and sip clean water directly through it.
₹750 / amazon.in

GoPro Hero 4 Black Edition
The Hero4 Black Edition shoots 4K resolution videos and 12MP burst photos at a blistering 30 frames per second. New night modes, built-in Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, and an all new microphone system should make this the first item on your Packing For Kenya list.
₹43,990 / amazon.in

Kingston MobileLite
SD card reader? Powerbank? Wireless media streamer? Router? Too many devices for that small backpack? Kingston's got you covered. The 2nd-generation MobileLite does all of these things and takes the space of a small paperback book.
₹3400 / amazon.in

Model Ramona Arena
Photographer Vikram Bawa
Stylist Seher Khan
Make-up and Hair EltonJFernandez
Jacket Aartivijaya Gupta,
Shorts Zara, **Rings** Aquamarine

THE SEA CALLS US HOME

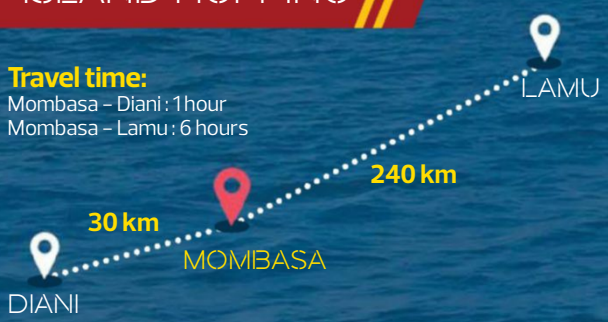
Interactive page

The Kenyan coast stretches for 536km along the Indian Ocean. Think uninterrupted seaside forests, white sands and blue waters. The most prominent city on the coast is Mombasa, the city we all know now thanks to *Inception* and *Halo*. A mere hour away from Nairobi by flight, Mombasa needs to be done for the food, the music scene and of course, for the sea.

Well connected via land, air and water, Mombasa serves as a great base for covering the coast of Kenya. Go 30km south and you'll find yourself at the Diani beach. It features in Tripadvisor's top 25 beaches of the world list and is a hub for scuba diving, whale shark safari and more. Too much adrenaline? Go 240 km north and relax on the islands of Lamu and Manda.

ISLAND HOPPING

Travel time:
Mombasa – Diani : 1hour
Mombasa – Lamu : 6 hours

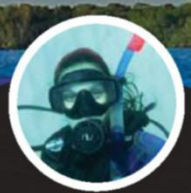


Getting around:
Regular buses and taxis go from Mombasa to Diani as well as Lamu. The commute between islands is done on fishing boats. Haggle with the fishermen and you can get a great deal.

Stay
At the Lantana Galu beach and the Watano Beach House at Diani – wake up everyday to the sound of waves. Ride a camel on the beach.

Eat
Ali Barbour's Cave Restaurant in Diani – the place is INSIDE an ancient coral cover. Great seafood – pig out on those prawns and wash it all down with the native Tusker beer.

Listen
Mombasa has a phenomenal music scene; keep an ear out for the numerous tunes doing the rounds – Zanzibar's Taraab music, the fast-paced Chakacha, the traditional Mwanzele and even, wait for it, Bhangra.



"I EXPERIMENTED WITH FORMS OF YOGA I HADN'T EVEN HEARD OF, SURROUNDED BY DONKEYS (THE ONLY MODE OF TRANSPORT BESIDES BOATS) AND THE MOST PICTURE-PERFECT WATERS."

DONT MISS

Yoga in Lamu
One of the oldest towns in Africa and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Lamu is a place caught in time. Every year in March, the islands of Lamu and Manda host a Yoga Festival in a town called Shela. Registrations are now open for 2016 at lamuyoga.org

Whale Shark Safari at Diani beach
If you want to do something truly unforgettable, sign up for one of the many whale shark safaris in the region. Some of them guarantee a swim with the sharks, which is awesome and terrifying in equal measures.

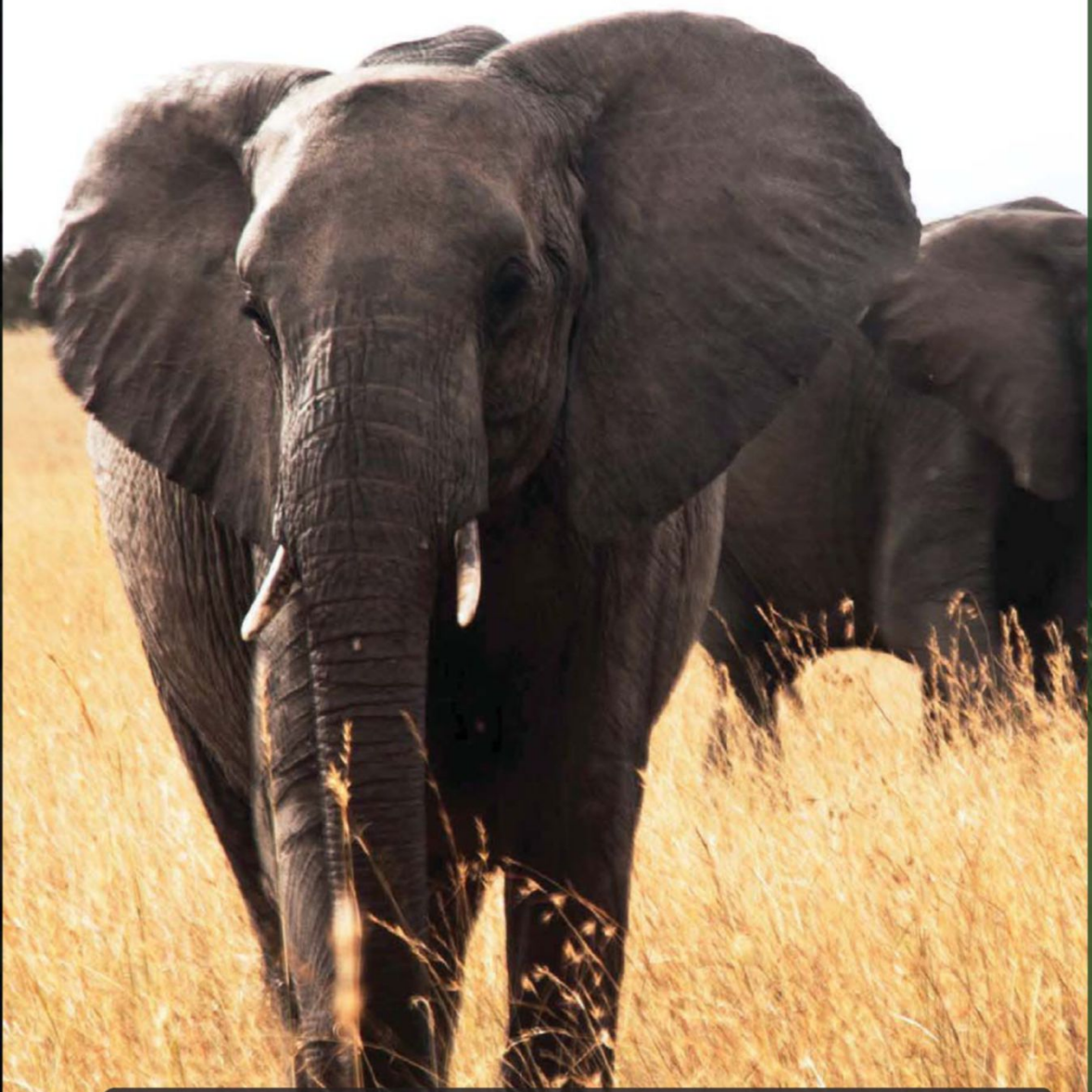
Kitesurfing at Diani beach
What is kitesurfing exactly? Kitesurfing involves one person on a modified surfboard, holding onto a specially designed big kite that uses the wind and drags the surfboard on the sea at crazy speeds. Sounds good? Yes sir.

PANASONIC TOUGHBOOK

Dainty little ultrabooks are fine for the city but venture out of Nairobi and suddenly the dust/water/wilderness takes its toll. Make way for the very appropriately named Toughbook. The Panasonic Toughbook is the world's lightest and thinnest semi-rugged laptop in its class. It features a spill-resistant magnesium alloy design, a hard drive heater, a dedicated GPS and 4G LTE. An astounding 11 hours of battery and a choice of Core i5 or i7 processors means you can take this baby here anywhere on God's green earth and do anything with it.
₹1,39,000 / in.panasonictoughbook.asia

Interactive page

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE



All things said and done, it all boils down to this: Kenya has some of the most magnificent animals on the planet and the safari experience here is unparalleled. 300km from Nairobi is the Shaba National Reserve. It's a 45-minute flight away from the capital, but we recommend a 5-hour picturesque drive around Mt. Kenya. The crown jewel, though, the *Sistine Chapel* of Kenya, is the Masaai Mara National Reserve. Save this one for last. Kenyan wildlife has two distinct categories – The Special Five and the Big Five. The Special Five – Beisa Oryx, Garenuk, Somali Ostrich, Reticulated Giraffe and Grevy's Zebra – are found in abundance in the Shaba National Reserve, while the Big Five – Lion, Cheetah, Elephant, African Buffalo and the Rhinoceros – frequent the Masaai Mara National Reserve.

THE BUSH

The 'wild' in Kenya is locally known as the 'Bush'. The bush is unforgiving and majestic. The bush is home to the greatest mammals that have ever walked Earth, some of the oldest tribes in the world and of course, the largest animal migration in the world.

Survival of the fittest: Africa's Great Migration
Every year about 1.5 million wildebeest, zebra and several species of antelope uniformly make a circular tour between the Serengeti in Tanzania and Maasai Mara in Kenya, in search of greener pastures. From July to October, the grazing animals take a four-month-long trek towards the swollen Mara River and during this mass crossing, some truly spectacular scenes happen – thousands of wildebeests try to cross the river as lions and crocodiles try to take them out.

The Masaai people of Kenya
Renowned the world over for jumping to great heights, the Masaai tribe has been around in Kenya and Tanzania for centuries. Their ways have largely remained unchanged over the years, but the tribes are very hospitable, as seen in this picture of Ramona trying to compete with one of the Masaai men.

PACK YOUR BAGS

"THE ACACIA TREE IS SYNONYMOUS WITH AFRICA. WHAT YOU NEVER SEE IN THE PICTURES THOUGH IS JUST HOW MANY THORNS THE BRANCHES HAVE. NOT JUST ORDINARY-SIZED THORNS, THESE GUYS ARE GIGANTIC! I FOUND OUT THE HARD WAY – WITH ONE STICKING FROM MY FOOT AFTER PIERCING THE SOLE OF MY SHOE."

THE ONLY WAY TO LIVE

Kenya, one of the top tourist spots of the world, obviously has its share of great hotels. We won't give you a list of five star accommodation that you can find anywhere. We will, however, suggest the one place you have to stay at. Wildlife is the quintessential Kenyan experience and what better way to take the jungle in than a luxury tent? Feast your eyes on the Sarova Mara Game Camp.

Located in the heart of the Masaai Mara Game Reserve in South West Kenya, the Mara Game Camp is just a 40-minute flight away from Nairobi. The property is surrounded by jungles and streams and it is not uncommon to see elephants and baboons from your window.

You'd be hard-pressed to do luxury tents better than this – light beige canvas with large 'windows', spectacular view, wooden flooring and a permanent roof. All tents have en-suite bathrooms, hot showers, mini-bar... the works.

There is no room service. Instead, all meals are served 'al fresco' at the Isokun restaurant, overlooking the main pool and the forest. The Camp grows its own produce and prides itself on an extensive cellar of imported wines. Rooms start from ₹10,500 per person, per night. Book directly from sarovahotels.com

GOING SOMEWHERE?

BEST TIME TO VISIT

January – March and June – October

KENYA WEATHER

Average of 27°C at the coast, 21°C to 27°C around Nairobi. Gets chilly during the nights.

ESSENTIALS

Due to its proximity to the Equator, Kenya's temperatures fluctuate wildly. Pack sunblock, hat, sunglasses, a warm jacket and insect repellant.

GETTING THERE

Non-stop flights go from Mumbai only, take about 6 hours and cost upward of ₹50,000. Prices shown here are approximate and for a return trip.

TIP

Get tickets upto three months in advance for a good deal. Tuesdays and Wednesdays tend to be the best days for booking airline tickets. Looking at more flights? Go incognito. Airlines use cookies to rack up the flight rates.

GETTING AROUND

Best mobile network
Safaricom

Best connected airline
Safari Link

Best payment system
Mpesa

Feel the G4ce

With the launch of the G4, LG is back to the fighting pits with deadlier weaponry on all fronts, and we have the best seats in the house to witness the fight!

₹51,500 / lg.com/in

Is the frantic pace ever going to slacken? We hope not. Flagship smartphones are being launched with more regularity than we could ever imagine, with fiercer tech, may we add.

The LG G4 is the latest and it kicks up enough dust to have us ogle and then rub our eyes in disbelief. That leather-back look is genuinely hard to ignore. We love the way it feels in our hands. For our vegan friends though, delightful plastic back covers are available too.

A 16MP camera on the rear with optical image stabilisation and F1.8 aperture will unleash your inner paparazzi. Add the 8MP snapper on the front into the mix and you'll have left 'selfie'-crazed humans breathless.

However, battery life could have been better and you'd kill for wireless charging. LG also needs to do away with skinning Android the way it does. Sure, complain. But tell us, who gives you a removable battery and a built-in microSD slot with support for 2TB microSD memory? Score. Yeah?

1 Quad me eyes
The quad-HD 2560x1440 pixel, 538ppi display dares you to point out a single pixel. As you view Full HD videos or play games, what you get is prime levels of colour, sharpness and contrast. Brightness is good, but we would have loved a touch more grunt for daylight viewing.

2 It's all in the touch
Honestly, when we saw that optional black leather back cover, our thoughts started to digress, but LG here has done a genuinely good job of injecting copious levels of premium into its new smartphone. It helps you forget the rather thick 9.8mm deep frame.

Tech specs

Screen 5.5in IPS Quantum LCD, 2560x1440 (538ppi)
CPU 1.8GHz 64-bit Hexa-Core Snapdragon 808
Memory 3GB **OS** Android 5.1, Lollipop
Cameras 16MP rear with f/1.8 aperture, 1/2.6in lens, OIS, Laser AF, RAW capture, 8MP front
Storage 32GB+microSD (expandable up to 2TB)
Battery / Removable 3000 mAh / yes

G4 + Fantastic four

Here are a few things you might have to consider to unleash even more awesome from your new G4

Swappable backcovers

Change is the only true constant. You have heard that many times, we know. LG understands and it lets you choose from an array of interchangeable genuine leather back or plastic covers.

Tone stories

LG Tone Infinim Bluetooth headset bundles the sonic goods from Harman Kardon and features retractable ear buds. With 14 hours of playback time, we reckon you won't be complaining much.

For the movie glut

The 32 gigs of internal storage on your G4 is fab, for the first month. Then stick this mammoth Sandisk microSD card in, ramp up the total capacity to 232GB and grin with unfathomable viciousness.

Urbane instincts

You've got the phone, now get the watch, let the look be complete as you waltz into your next meeting. The 1.3in P-OLED display is a delight to work with and the 410mAh battery lasts long enough.

3 Click easy
Image quality is crisp and you will thank the wide F1.8 aperture, 1/2.6in lens as you shoot in low light. A laser-focussing module on the rear shoots IR beams to track down the distance of the object you want to click and helps AF torpedo to that exact point. It works pretty well.

4 Future-proof yourself
For those who are absolutely in love with their LG G4, you won't need to dump it if the battery goes kaput two years down the line. Simply pull off the back cover and replace it with a new one. LG is even bundling a free extra battery to save you the trouble of having to buy one.

Image quality absolutely matters to me and the G4 clearly impresses in that department. It is still a bit large for my liking and LG's OS skin needs to improve. But I can't take my eyes off the sublime screen or place it back on the desk thanks to the leather cover and the fact that I can change it whenever I like. I can also add more storage. Pure bliss *@yatish_suvarna*

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★
Imaginative, fully loaded but not perfect. Yet, we are mighty impressed with LG's latest effort

Meet the future of the laptop

Apple melds the portability of a MacBook Air with the screen of a MacBook Pro... there might be some compromises, but you're still going to want one

from ₹99,900 / apple.com/in

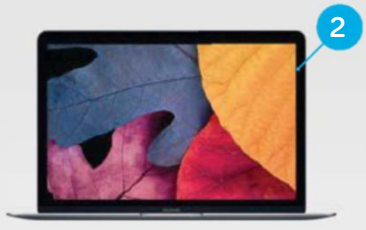
It may not be ready to replace the Pro or Air versions just yet, but the design of the MacBook 12in makes everything else look plain old. It packs in a beautiful Retina display despite being smaller than the already tiny 11in Air, and at 920g it's even lighter.

It uses one of Intel's new Core M processors and, as a result, isn't quite as powerful as an Air or Pro, but unless you're doing some serious processor-straining you won't notice. It has a nine-hour battery life and can even handle recent games if you tweak the graphics settings.

Is this the perfect laptop? No, there's certainly room for improvement. Aside from the headphone socket there's just one connector: it's a new USB-C port, and it doubles as the power socket. Want to plug in a mouse? You'll need an adapter. Ditto for an external display.

The keyboard is shallower too; it's crisp as a frosty morning but takes some getting used to. Can you live with these little niggles? Yes, of course you can.

1 Sounds bigger than it looks
The MacBook 12in has amazing new speakers, with a grille that sits just above the keyboard. This laptop may be tiny but it sounds bigger than even the chunkier Pro versions. Your tunes sound like they're expanding out way beyond the laptop's sides. Impressive stuff.

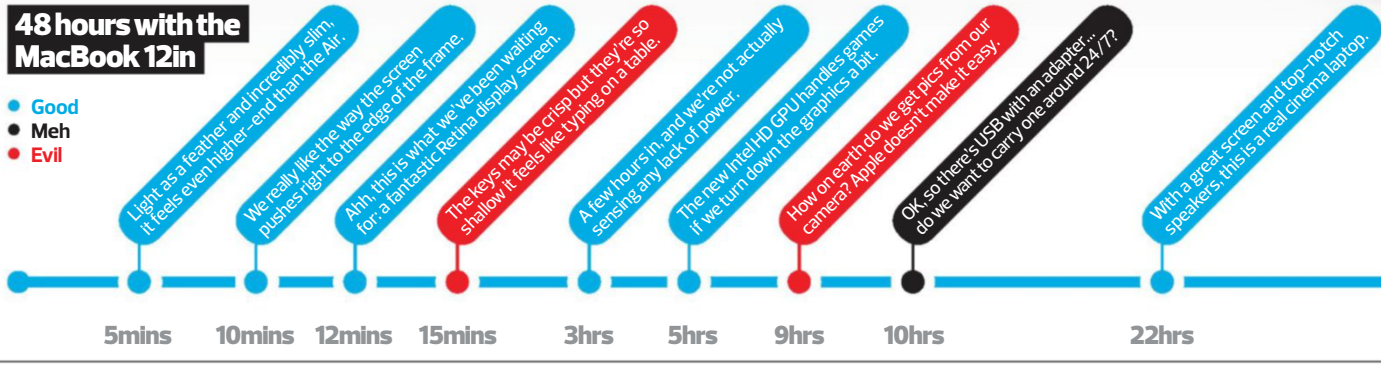


2 Telly-topping Retina
A 12in screen of 2304x1440 pixels is sharp enough to earn Apple's Retina display badge. This is one seriously nice screen. Almost every aspect is top-notch: colour, contrast and top brightness. There's a good chance it's even more pixel-packed than your TV.

3 Futurific trackpad
The keyboard and trackpad both have a new-for-2015 design. This is the only MacBook to get the ultra-crisp slimline keyboard, while the trackpad is pressure-sensitive. Press harder and you get a secondary deep 'click' that unlocks new features in apps. It's a true next-gen trackpad.

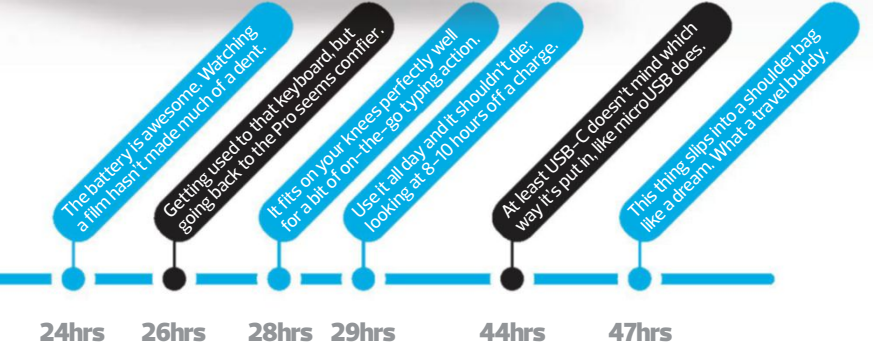
48 hours with the MacBook 12in

- Good
- Meh
- Evil



4 Lost connection
So how do you deal with a laptop with no connections? It's not straightforward, but you can get a USB-C to USB adapter. This'll let you plug in a mouse, a USB card reader, whatever you like. Get a USB hub involved and you'll be completely sorted.

5 It matches my phone
Unlike previous MacBooks, the MacBook 12in comes in three colours, not just 'naked' silvery aluminium. You get no points for guessing the inspiration of the grey and gold versions you now have to agonise over – these are exactly the same colour options as the iPhone 6.



Tech specs

Screen 12in IPS LCD, 2304x1440
CPU Intel Core M 1.1GHz **GPU** Intel HD 5300
OS Mac OS X **Storage** 256GB or 512GB SSD
RAM 8GB **Connectivity** Wi-Fi 802.11ac, USB-C
Dimensions 280x196x13mm **Weight** 920g

Going deeper underground

Don't let its clean, smooth looks deceive you... there's a lot more going on beneath the surface

Butterfly buttons
Under those keyboard keys is a new mechanism. Rather than a scissor, it's butterfly-shaped so that the keys don't wiggle. They may be shallow but they're some of the most secure laptop keys ever.

Battery-packed
Open up a MacBook and you'll see it's a technical marvel. The logic board is absolutely tiny, letting Apple fill the casing almost entirely with battery. It's stacked up in thin layers letting it fill every nook.

USB Power
Meet USB-C. This is the future of USB. It can take up to 100W of power, letting it double as the power socket. Most importantly, though, you can insert it either way round. Finally.

Feel the Force
Beneath the glass Force Touch trackpad are both pressure sensors and a Taptic engine that provides the clicks that feel just like physical ones. The days of old fashioned hinge-y trackpads are over.

This is a fantastic ultraportable laptop. We'd love a little more keyboard travel, and one USB port or SD card slot would be great, but we're prepared to live without them for everything else the MacBook does so well. If you don't feel the same, go Pro and be happy. Make no mistake – this is the laptop you buy out of want, rather than need. *@stuff_india*

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★
It's contentious and wants you to change, but this MacBook heralds a bold and bright future for laptops

Thinking too hard

The workhorse from the Lenovo stable is here to do the heavy pulling. Honestly, we just can't stop admiring it...

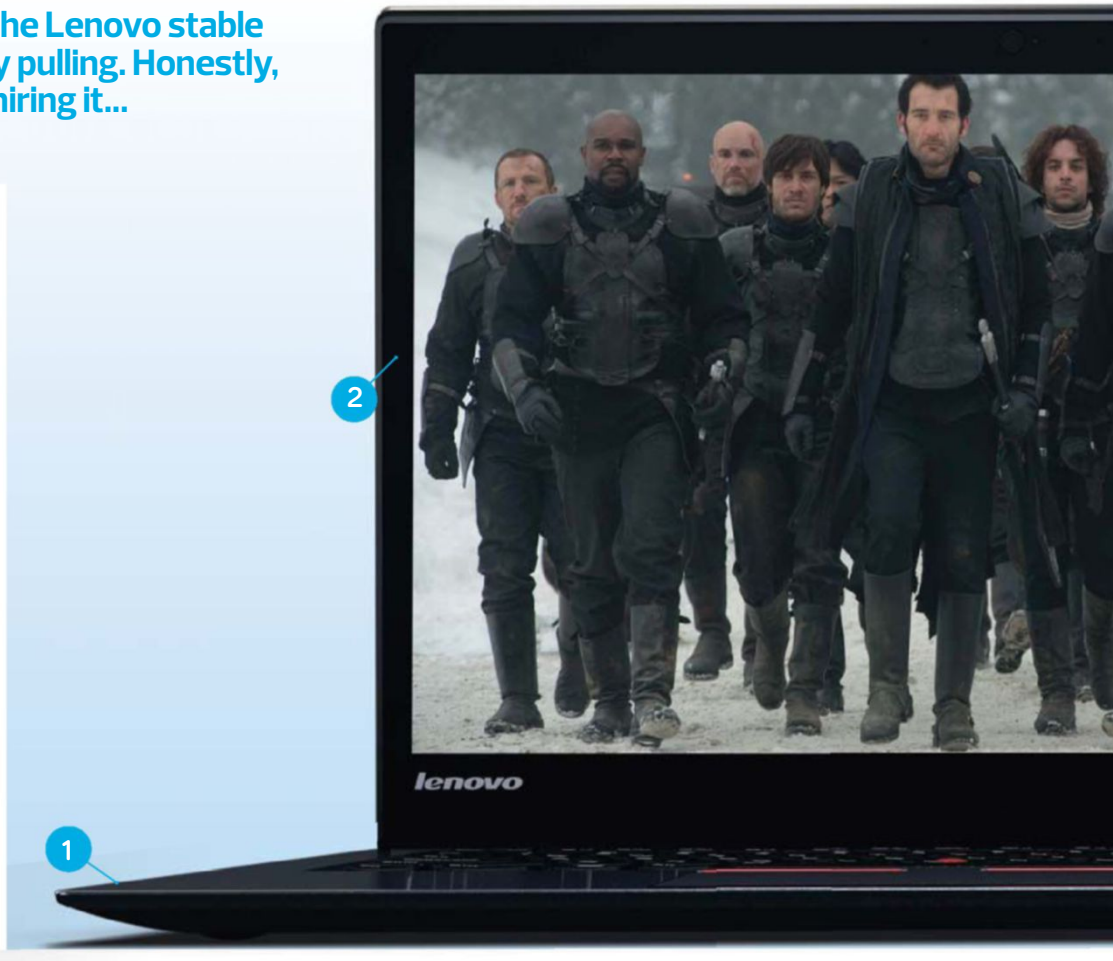
from ₹1,25,00 / lenovo.com/in

The previous Lenovo Thinkpad X1 Carbon was a pretty impressive machine and this new X1 improves on its predecessor. The changes are subtle in nature, but practical nonetheless. The X1 weighs a measly 1.3kg, which makes it extremely portable even for those with a weak backbone. How does it manage to be that light? The high-carb diet is the answer. And by carb, we mean carbonfibre.

The X1 weighs almost the same as the MacBook Air but offers larger screen estate and a resolution that beats the Air like Hulk beats Loki in *The Avengers*. But then again, there is a huge difference in price.

There have been some other changes made to the X1's keyboard and design which seem to be pretty interesting. From the looks of it, Lenovo seems to have listened to its customers and might have just produced the sweetest ultrabook till date.

But is the Carbon X1 as sweet as it looks? Let's find out...



Interactive page

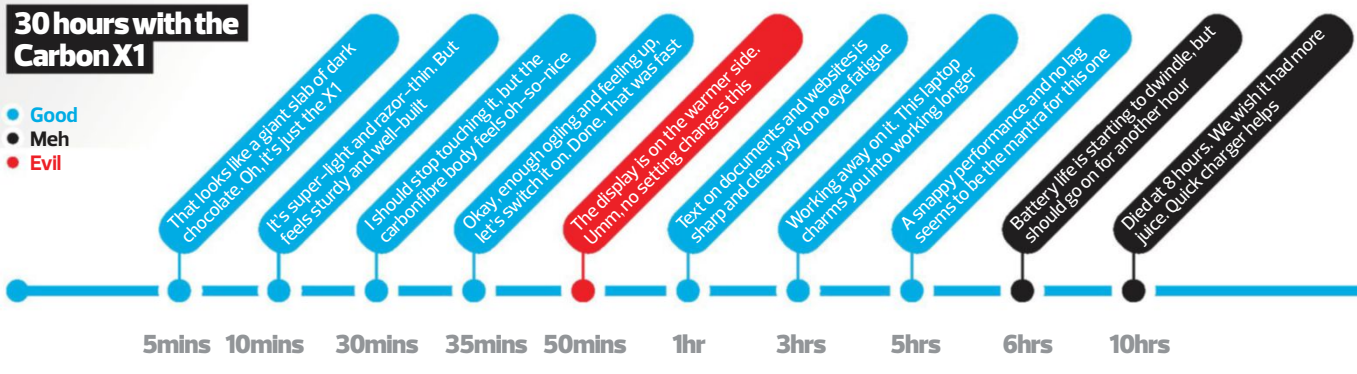
1 Whole lotta carbon
The all-black X1 Carbon is made of carbonfibre and glass-fibre reinforced plastic. The bottom half is made of magnesium and aluminium that just blends with the rest of the bits like chocolate and more chocolate. Overall design is subtly impressive.

2 Knots and nits
The X1 sports a 2560 x 1440 WQHD touch display with a claimed brightness of 270 nits. It seems to be on the warmer side of the spectrum, but is not one bit harsh on the eye and doesn't cause fatigue. But darker scenes in movies and games suffer.

3 Keyboard is key
The charm of this ultrabook lies in its keyboard. It is an absolute delight to type on and makes other keyboards you've used feel like typewriters. The more traditional function keys have been added and work better than the previous capacitive touch keys.

30 hours with the Carbon X1

- Good
- Meh
- Evil



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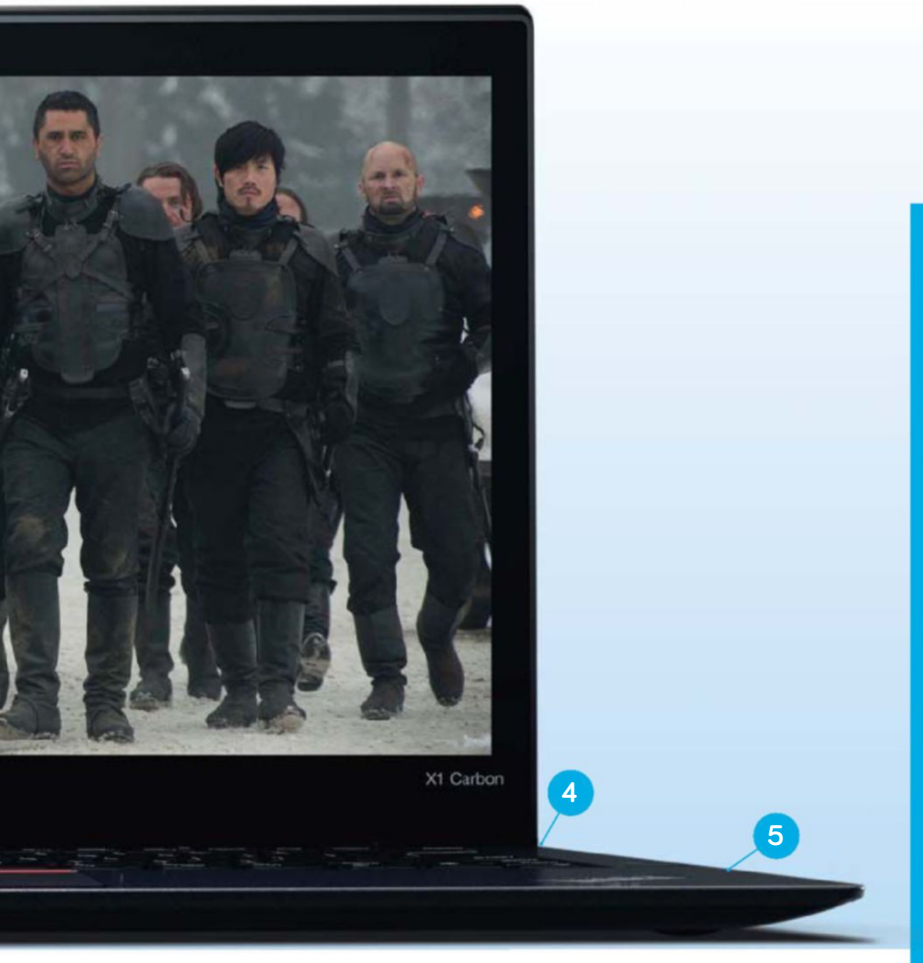


Tech specs

Screen 14in FHD TN (1920 x 1080) (300 nit)
Processor 2.70Ghz Intel Core i5-5200U
OS Windows 7 Professional (64 bit)
Connections 2 x USB 3.0 (1 with AOU), Audio / Mic Combo, OneLink Dock, HDMI, MiniDP, Ethernet ext. port
Battery MM12 (50Wh)
Storage upto 512GB PCIe 4-Channel
RAM 4GB DDR3L-12800 1600 MHz
Dimensions 331.0x226.8mm, 1.3kg

Overthinking

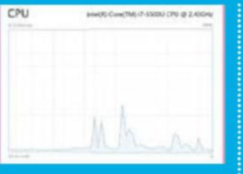
The Carbon X1 isn't just fancy material, it's got many other tricks and goodies. Like these...

Playing Sherlock

Those paranoid about safety can calm down. The fingerprint scanner works wonderfully unless you have hands that can put an ogre to shame. For mortals, though, it works like a charm and is addictive.

Tracking the pad

The TrackPoint is red and adds style. But it's not just a pretty face; it proves useful when you want to select long stretches of text or multiple files, but it takes time to get used to.



Calm and cool

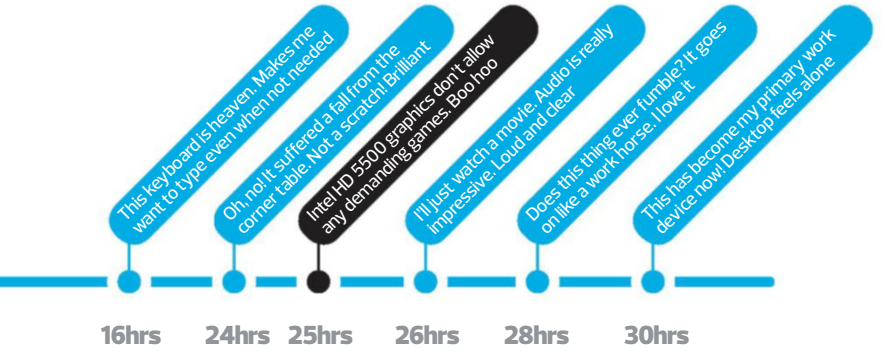
Even with all its grunt, the Carbon X1 is extremely quiet. You can work it to the max without waking Tommy from his deep canine slumber. It does heat up a bit when pushed, but nothing alarming.

S to the S to the D

The Carbon X1 gets a Samsung SSD that is lightning quick. Transferring 5GBs takes a mere minute and sometimes it's quicker. It feels nice in an odd, ego-boosting way.

4 Battery: lock down
We managed to squeeze out about 8 hours of a full day's use at work with brightness at 60% and light browsing with a couple of other apps running. Disgruntled workaholics might get a lower number if they use heavy apps and higher brightness.

5 Thinkmad performance
Our touch version had the Intel Core i7-5600U Broadwell Processor that performed wonderfully. The Lenovo scored 691 on the 3DMark Fire Strike test and SunSpider returned a value of 208ms, which is very good in terms of ultrabook benchmarks.



If money grows on trees or comes out of the company's pocket for you, the X1 is unbeatable. So, ultimately, in the world ultrabook championship, the X1 clearly is on the top. Let's just say while the Carbon X1 might be the Floyd Mayweather of the ultrabook world, the XPS 13 is Manny Pacquiao. *@kaizzzad*

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★
The X1 goes to the top with all that it is capable of and sets new standards for ultrabooks

The second coming

Having a best-seller in the segment hasn't stopped Audi from putting its design team to work, yet again. The facelifted Q3 is set to rule once more

from ₹28.99 lacs / audi.in

The original Q3 was never a butch-looking machine, but that's the first thing you'll notice about the new face. The large single-frame grille now meets the headlights with a sporty aluminium bridge that turns the profile from meek to mean. You'll like it, just like we did. Look closer and even the bumpers have gone through a nip and a tuck. The fog lights are MIA, thanks to the full LED headlights that also get a new eyebrow pattern and double up as fog lights if need be. The tail lights too get the LED treatment with dynamic turn indicators, which Audi is quick to point out, is a feature that was only available on the flagship R8 until now.

There's a new 17in wheel design too with great rubber from Pirelli, but the India-spec car is raised to increase ground clearance, making the wheels appear a tad small despite their generous diameter. But overall, the look is more grown up now and less of an entry-level SUV. This is a proper jab at luxury for the uninitiated.

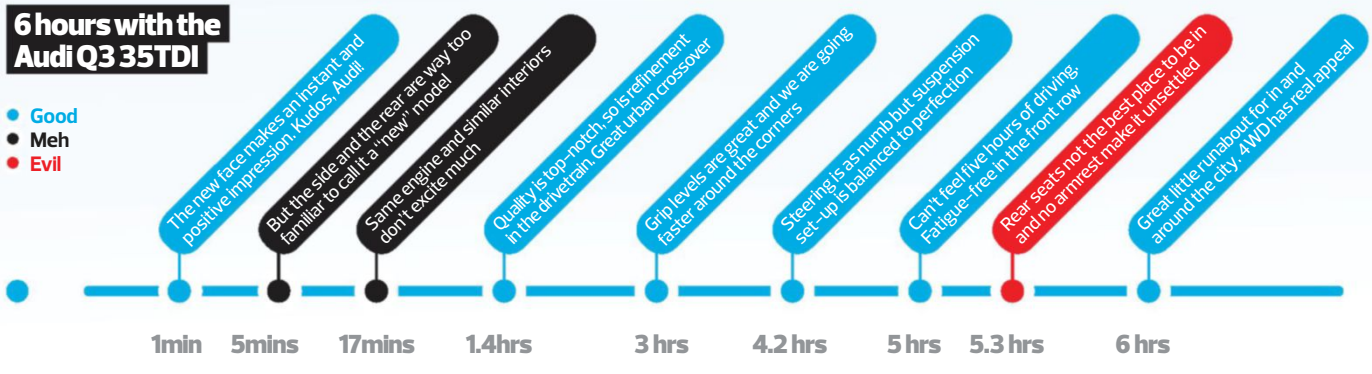
1 New face, new mane
Apparently, we're not the only ones who thought the earlier Q3 looked buck-toothed. So, the Audi dentists have fixed her up with a shiny new mouth and a wider smile that looks smarter, younger and sportier all at once. Even the finish is the classy matte variety that Germans are known for.

2 Old but adequate engine
Doing duty in many VW group cars, the 2.0TDI motor powering the Q3 is unchanged from the current-gen car. That means it still develops 177bhp of diesel power and a 380Nm dose of shove. Audi has generously added paddle shift to make the drive a bit more involving. It gets the job done.

3 Still quattro. Still capable
It might not qualify for the Paris-Dakar, but anything the big, bad city can throw at it, the 4WD drivetrain handles effortlessly. We even managed to get a couple of wheels up in the air during our drive in Goa, so we know. A low ratio selector is absent, but it's still the only small SUV with 4WD!

6 hours with the Audi Q3 35TDI

- Good
- Meh
- Evil



Tech specs

Engine 2.0 litre 4-cyl turbocharged diesel
Power 177bhp@2500rpm
Max torque 380Nm
Top speed 212kmph
Acceleration 0–100 kmph 8.2 seconds
Transmission 7-speed DSG automatic / 4WD
Wheels 235/55 R17
Fuel tank capacity 64 litres

A quattro with even more sundries

Audi has kitted out the new Q3 to better compete with the competition from BMW and Mercedes

A view to drive for

The compact dimensions of the Q3 can make the occupants feel holed up inside, but thanks to the new panoramic sunroof, the cabin ambience is lifted immediately and also frees up headroom.

Select your mood

As with many other Audi models, the Q3 now gets the Drive Select control which toggles between Auto, Comfort and Sport. Obviously, you know what each means and does. Don't you?

Top craftsmanship

The current-generation Q3 is functional but the new one definitely has aspirations to become more luxurious. The inserts in Aluminium Tangent Silver prove that Audi is high on quality.

Total entertainment

Packed with 10 speakers, the sound isn't the best but it is cabin-filling. But what you do get is plenty of media options. Two card slots, 20GB HDD storage and Bluetooth streaming are all standard.

4 Striking the perfect balance
The 'rough road' package the Q3 rides on doesn't take away from this car's biggest strength — its compliant yet controlled and comfortable ride quality. It handles like a hatch around corners with minimum understeer and the grip levels are fantastic. The engine could do with more poke, though.

5 Maximum storage. Minimum fuss
A new storage package now offers a huge parcel shelf that is perfect to just throw things at the back and forget about them. Seats down and you can free up to 1365 litres of space, good enough to gobble up a studio apartment in Mumbai. The back seat, though isn't the roomiest and it's best left for short adults.

Revisiting the Q3 after three years on the same roads of Goa was a revelation. The new version is more confident at high speeds and the inclusion of paddle shifts makes it more involving to drive. The motor should sound better and have more poke, but it's still refined and adequate for most conditions. *@nishantpadhiar*

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★
A practical softroader made even better with substantial aesthetic and mechanical improvements

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The cool shot

A bright screen and a fantastic camera, but is that going to be enough for what's a pretty tightly packed midrange field?

■ Squared-off corners, a large screen and the flat back mean the X7 isn't really a one-hand device. Though we have to say the front-and-back Gorilla Glass 3 and aluminium frame along the sides make it look premium enough, if a bit 'last generation'.

■ We love the X7's display. The 5.2in, 1080p screen is an AMOLED part, which means deep blacks and rather vibrant colours. But the best part about it is the fantastic brightness – you're not gonna have any trouble even at noon on a sunny June day!

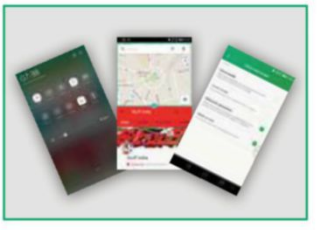
■ The X7 uses a 32-bit MediaTek 6595 chipset paired with 2GB RAM, a combo that's powerful enough to run *Asphalt 8* quite smoothly, albeit with a lot of heating up. Even in daily use, the X7 always seems responsive, and comes off as a solid mid-ranger.

■ The X7's 13MP, f/1.8 rear camera takes great snaps, with OIS and the wide aperture making for good low light performance and video. The 8MP front camera is also rather adept at low-light shooting. The perfect pub accessory? Perhaps.

■ The X7's 2700mAh battery is enough for a day's comfortable usage, and the 16GB storage can be expanded by another 32GB. Sadly though, the microSD slot is shared with the second SIM.

Tech specs

OS CoolUI 6 (Android Kitkat) **RAM** 2GB
Storage 16GB (expandable up to 32GB)
Screen 1920x1080, 5.2in AMOLED with Gorilla Glass 3 **Battery** 2700mAh
Connectivity USB 2.0, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, Dual SIM(2nd slot is shared with microSD), LTE
Camera 13MP with OIS (rear), 8MP (front)
Price ₹17,999 / coolpadindia.com



Old, but almost gold

CoolUI 6 might still be based on KitKat (an update is in the works), but despite that and the missing app drawer, it isn't half bad, with neat stuff like a split screen mode that lets you use 2 apps at once.

Say 'cheese'!

Cameras seem to be the new point of focus (pardon the pun) for everyone and the X7's no different. It's got a semi-manual 'Pro' mode and also packs a 'Beauty' mode for all you vain selfie fiends.

STUFF SAYS Great display and a fantastic camera, but the design seems a bit dated ★★★★★

Will phones soon do away with the need for point-and-shoot cameras?
@taoofdudeism

A smartphone will never replace a DSLR or a mirrorless camera, but when it comes to point-and-shoots, the countdown's begun – the latest crop of flagships do away with the need to carry a separate camera on vacation. As for the mid-range Dazen X7, it's got a fantastic camera for its corner of the market, matching it with pretty decent performance. Overall, a good phone, let down only by a design that seems outdated.

Splatoon

Nintendo's new franchise isn't a total misfire, but sometimes this paint-flinging online shooter can be too messy (and not in a good way)

The Wii U's top games are almost entirely big franchise affairs, but *Splatoon* is the rare anomaly: a Nintendo game that doesn't star Mario and isn't peppered with fan service. It's a totally new game – one that takes a familiar, popular genre and gives it a strong, properly Nintendo-esque twist. But the appeal of this multiplayer paint-blaster chips away much faster than expected.

Splatoon strips out the violence and machismo from the usual third-person shooters to leave a good-natured experience: the messiest game of paintball you've ever seen. You're a cartoonish squid creature, and in the eight-player online skirmishes, your job is to cover every bit of the ground with your team's colour.

You can still splatter enemies by dousing them with your hue, but deaths don't add to a team tally. And there's an added incentive to plaster the floors with your paint: you can submerse your character within a puddle, letting you sneak around while also refilling your blaster. Stealth adds a strategic element, as do the varying weapon selections (the giant paint roller is fantastic).

Four-on-four online showdowns are fast and fluid, whether you're coating the whole map (Turf War) or a certain segment (Splat Zones), but Nintendo fumbled the structure a bit. Only two of the six maps are playable at any given time in each mode, you can't exit lobbies after entering, and loadout changes aren't available between matches. Player progression is also slow, and such frustrations detract from the otherwise enjoyable action.

Meanwhile, the single-player challenge stages feel like scraps rather than a rich, collective campaign. It seems like padding to make this a full-priced disc game, but *Splatoon* would've been better served as a cheap or free-to-play online-only experience. Great fun moments are found online and it has much to offer, but this is a thin package overall.

STUFF SAYS *Splatoon* is original and great fun, but ultimately it lacks sticking power ★★★☆☆

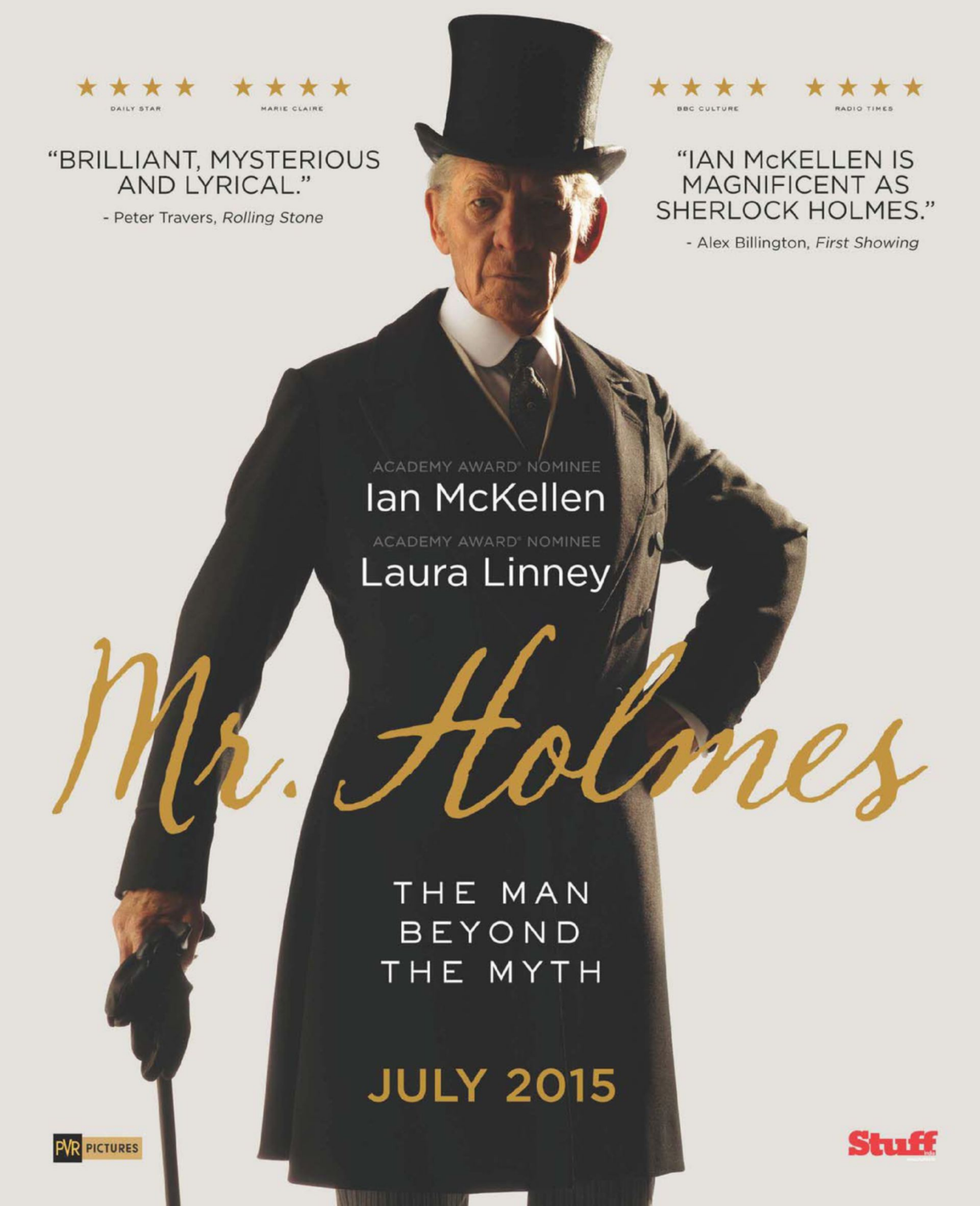
Splat Zone area battles are almost akin to Domination in *Call Of Duty*

Action is fast and fluid, and the bite-sized matches keep things frenzied

Mo' Amiibo

Already got a few dozen of Nintendo's NFC-chipped figurines in your home (and a bulging credit card bill to match)? Naturally, the company has more to offer alongside *Splatoon*, with girl, boy and squid-form Inkling figures up for sale. You can buy the boy and girl toys individually, get the squid bundled with the game, or snag a pack with all three toys together.

And these Amiibo are reasonably useful: tapping one to the GamePad unlocks a series of exclusive solo stages, making it much akin to buying DLC – albeit with a physical bonus. Sadly, only these particular Amiibo figures do anything in *Splatoon*: your Mario and Pikachu toys won't do squat, no matter how enthusiastically you press them against the controller.


★★★★ DAILY STAR
★★★★ MARIE CLAIRE
★★★★ BBC CULTURE
★★★★ RADIO TIMES
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- Peter Travers, Rolling Stone
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Project CARS

The visually spectacular 'Community Assisted Racing Simulation' used the cash and experience of over 80,000 gamers, but how does it drive?

PC, PS4, Xbox One / projectcarsgame.com

This is the racing sim that console gamers have been waiting for. The PC crowd has been kept fairly well supplied with hardcore simulations such as *Assetto Corsa*, but Xboxers have to make do with the fairly light *Forza* series and PlayStationers have to wait about a million years between *Gran Turismo* games. Not any more – *Project CARS* takes its racing very seriously.

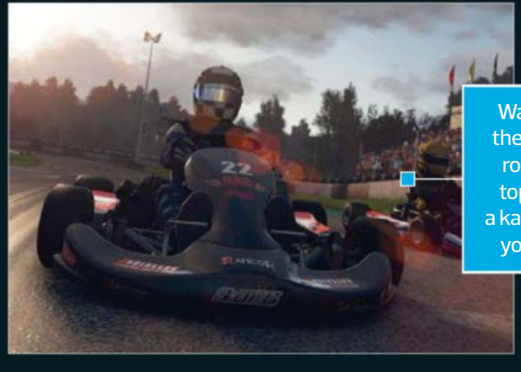
But that doesn't mean it's inaccessible to more casual racers. There are assists and a racing line (complete with braking point indicators) that means beginners can be competitive – but you do need to exercise a degree of concentration, consistency and patience that other games don't require. This is about stalking your prey, knocking a few tenths off their lead over a few laps and then sitting behind them for a few more corners, waiting for an opening.

It's super-competitive racing online with up to 16 players in each race, but set the AI skill level right (70% worked for us) and you can have real bumper-to-bumper racing offline in career mode too. And this is a career mode without experience points, unlocks or a story. Instead you choose which formula to start in – from karting to Clio Cup to touring cars to Formula A, plus everything in between – then race a season and hope you've scored enough points to be invited to move up to the next level. Honestly, combined with the quality of the racing, it's all the motivation you need.

As you get better you can reduce or switch off the assists, chuck variable weather into the equation (wet races are a fantastic nightmare) and up your opponent AI for a tougher challenge.

There are issues – getting your controller settings just right can take ages and is frustrating, finding a good multiplayer lobby is a pain in the backside, and elements such as pitting are so complicated they appear a dark art – but fixes are in the works. Even if those fixes never came, you'd still put up with the flaws for *Project CARS*' otherwise brilliant, beautiful racing.

Turn on the rain and you'll have a deliciously frustrating time trying to stay on the track



Want to take the traditional route to the top? Start in a kart and work your way up

STUFF SAYS Gloriously gimmick-free, *Project CARS* lets the racing do the talking ★★★★☆

A new Air apparent?

Both these laptops strike the perfect balance between power and portability for well under ₹1 lac. But is there finally a better option than the reigning MacBook Air?

Apple MacBook Air 13in

What's the story?
The laptop that practically invented the Ultrabook format has been updated for a seventh time. It's outwardly the same slim, light slice of tech, but Intel's latest Broadwell-generation Intel Core i5 CPUs let it rev that bit harder.

Is it any good?
Apple knows not to mess with a winning formula, and the Air 13in is still almost unbeatable. Just check out the battery life: up to 12 hours. Very few Windows laptops get anywhere close. What's more, with a Core i5 CPU playing conductor, OS X sings beautifully. (If you're planning to edit videos, upgrade the RAM to 8GB.)

There is, however, a sense that Apple is being a bit too slow to really change the Air, and the most obvious sign of this is the screen. When most phones are 1080p, the Air's panel seems quaintly old-fashioned. It looks plain bad when not viewed dead-on, and it's nowhere near as sharp as the Asus or Apple's other laptops.

And while it's one thing not to mess with a formula, Apple's fancy new 12in MacBook makes the Air's design look a little tired.

Price from ₹72,900 / apple.com/in
OS Mac OS X **Screen** 13in TN LCD, 1440x900 **CPU** 1.6GHz Intel Core i5 **GPU** Intel HD 6000 **RAM** 4/8GB **Storage** 128/256GB SSD **Connectivity** 802.11ac, USB 3.0 (x2), Thunderbolt 2.0, SD **Dimensions** 325x227x17mm, 1.35kg

Stuff says ★★★★☆
Still a great laptop with awesome battery life, but the screen and design are ageing

Asus Zenbook UX305

Whats the story?
Asus's Zenbook Ultrabooks normally cost a fair bit, but this one is pretty affordable while still giving you the look and feel of a far pricier laptop. Not bad, right? It also pips the more expensive MacBook Air in a few other important areas...

Is it any good?
The Zenbook is noticeably thinner and lighter than the Apple, and unusually for an Asus laptop, it also looks great.

It can't touch the MacBook on battery life, but with around nine hours of stamina when doing simple stuff, it still has decent staying power. That's largely down to using one of Intel's new Core M CPUs. These aren't as powerful as the Air's Core i5, but there's enough grunt to handle light duties and even some gaming. It has 8GB RAM as standard, and in use we found it to be generally smooth 24/7.

Its biggest win is the screen. With a great 1080p IPS display it easily outclasses the Air here, and the matt finish means you can take it out in the sun without being bombarded by reflections. And to seal the deal, it's ₹20,000 cheaper than the Apple.

Price ₹49,999 / asus.com/in
OS Windows 8.1 **Screen** 13.3in Auto IPS, 1920x1080 **CPU** Intel Core M 5Y10 **GPU** Intel HD 5300 **RAM** 4/8GB **Storage** 128/256GB SSD **Connectivity** 802.11ac, USB 3.0 (x3), micro HDMI, SD **Dimensions** 324x226x12.3mm, 1.2kg

Stuff says ★★★★★
A brilliant bargain, and our new favourite ultraportable laptop

APPLE VS MICROSOFT: THE 2015 EDITION

● **Work perks**
One of the big benefits of OS X is that it gets you Office-style apps such as Pages for free. Numbers and Keynote round off a pretty good suite for work stuff. With Windows, you need to get your hands on an Office 365 subscription for the Microsoft equivalent. The UX305 doesn't come with one, and it's ₹4199 a year.

● **Ready to play**
Windows is a much better bet for games than OS X. PC makers are struggling, but the platform still gets many more new games releases than Macs; see the Steam catalogue for proof. That doesn't make the UX305 a high-end games machine, though – it's more of a casual gamer.

1 Thunder and Lightning
One of the new 'hidden' features is a Thunderbolt 2 port, getting you epic bandwidth of 20GBps. That's four times as fast as USB 3.0.

2 Magnet power
A great USP of MacBooks is the MagSafe power socket. Trip over the cable and it'll just fall out, not send the laptop clattering to the ground.

3 Nanochips
The Intel Core M CPU has a crazy-efficient 14nm architecture, the same used in the chips of the most advanced smartphones.

4 Hook-up master
With three USB 3.0 ports and a microHDMI socket, it has better connectivity than most ultra-slim laptops. Plugging into a monitor is no problem.

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THE TOWERS OF TECH

We've come a long way from mud huts and mammoth-bone tents. *Stuff* discovers the futuristic buildings that think they're giant gadgets

THE ECO WARRIORS

One Central Park
Sydney, Australia /
centralparksydney.com

What's the story?
This twin-tower skyscraper by French architect Jean Nouvel is equipped with a heliostat system – a huge panel of motorised mirrors that track sunlight and reflect it into a street that would otherwise be in permanent shadow. It also boasts a remote-controlled irrigation system that allows over 1000 species of plants to grow without soil across the building's walls.

FACT!
When the sun goes down, the suspended mirrors transform into a canvas for an impressive LED light show by the renowned artist Yann Kersalé.

THE ECO WARRIORS

▲Agora Garden

Taipei, Taiwan (due 2016) / vincent.callebaut.org

What's the story?
This twisted 20-storey marvel now under construction in Taiwan's capital could be mistaken for a giant DNA strand. The double-helix construction isn't just for show, though. It creates a cascade of balconies covered in vegetable gardens and fruit trees, so residents will be able to grow their own food and compost their waste.

Fact! A 1000m² pergola of photovoltaic panels on the roof will generate enough energy to make it entirely self-sufficient.

▶ZEB Pilot House

Larvik, Norway / snohetta.com

What's the story?
This house by architectural superstars Snøhetta not only generates enough electricity for itself – it has enough left over to fuel an electric car all year round. Its sloping roof is covered with solar panels and collectors that draw as much energy from the sun as possible, while energy wells in the ground supplement this with geothermal power.

Fact! The building is so well insulated that two radiators – one on each floor – are enough to heat every room.

▼Italy Pavilion, Expo 2015

Milan, Italy / expo2015.org

What's the story?
Italy's national pavilion at the upcoming Milan Expo has been designed by Italian studio Nemesi & Partners to clean the air around it, thanks to the smog-purifying cement covering its exterior. Made from recycled aggregates, including scraps of Carrara marble, the material can transform airborne pollutants into harmless salts.

Fact! Over three quarters of the special air-purifying cement is itself made from recycled materials.

[Picture Bruce Damonte]

◀LEAPrus 3912

Caucasus, Russia / caucasus.ru

What's the story?
With an altitude of 5642m, the dormant volcano Mount Elbrus is Europe's highest peak, but that didn't stop Italian studio LEAPfactory building a hotel on top of it. The vertiginous building is made up of four resin and fibreglass tubes, which were prefabricated in a factory before being airlifted to the site in pieces.

Fact! Forget having to harvest rainwater – this hotel melts some of the surrounding snow to provide water for flushing toilets.

THE SURVIVALISTS

Halley VI Research Station

Brunt Ice Shelf, Antarctica
/ hbarchitects.co.uk

What's the story?
Imagine an environment where temperatures drop to as low as -56°C, the sun doesn't rise for three months, and the icy ground below you can crack at any time. British architect Hugh Broughton was tasked with creating a building where at least 16 scientists can endure these conditions all year round. His response? A chain of heavy-duty modules that use hydraulic legs to climb up out of the snow.

FACT!
As the ice shelf floats out towards the ocean, the modules can be lowered onto giant steel skis and towed by bulldozers to a safer inland location.

Amphibious House

Buckinghamshire, England
/ bacahomes.co.uk

What's the story? What do you do if you live on a flood plain? When you're not cringing at building insurance quotes, you build a house that floats. This timber-framed structure by Baca Architects sits inside an excavated 'wet dock' that allows its to rise up like a boat during extreme flooding, guided by four vertical posts.

Fact! The tiered garden gives an early warning – once the first two terraces begin to fill up, they can expect the house to start moving.

THE TECH ICONS

Spaceport America
New Mexico, USA
/ spaceportamerica.com

What's the story?
The world's first commercial spaceport, this is the departure lounge for space tourists. For added drama, the astronaut areas are integrated with the terminal and voyagers can even take a peek inside the control room. Behind the scenes, tubes boring down into the earth reduce the building's heating, ventilation and air-conditioning costs by as much as 70%.

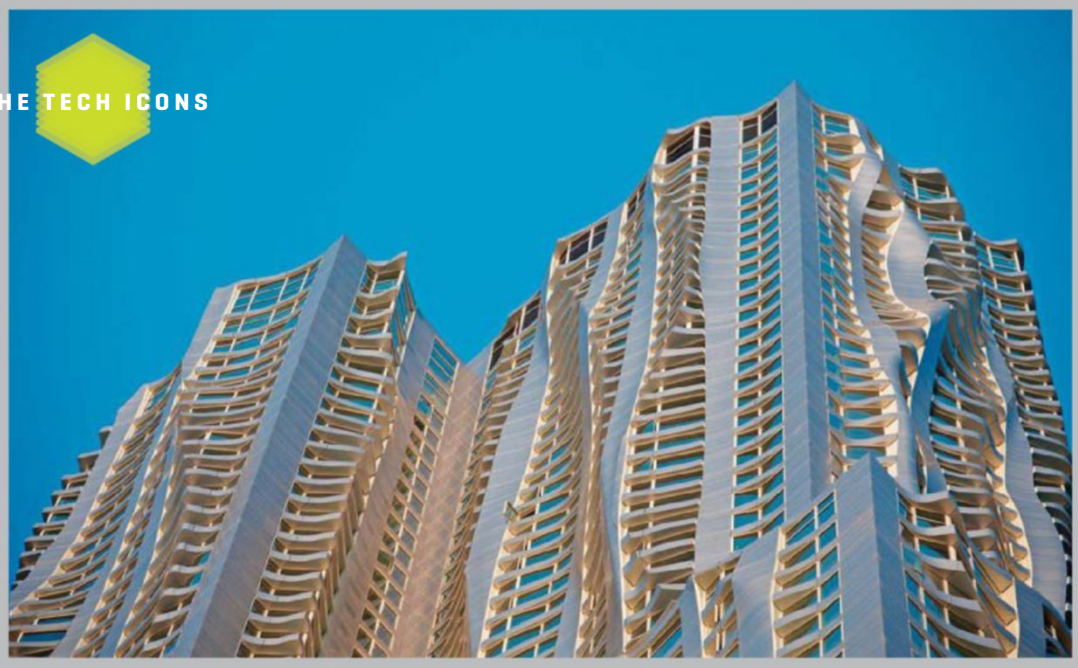
FACT!
Designed around the dimensions of Virgin Galactic spacecraft, the hangar can support two WhiteKnightTwo and five SpaceShipTwo vehicles.

Lucas Museum Of Narrative Art
Chicago, USA (due 2018)
/ lucasmuseum.org

What's the story? It seems fitting that Ma Yansong's design for a museum for director George Lucas wouldn't look out of place in a *Star Wars* movie. Proposed for Chicago's lakefront, the mountain-like structure will present a history of the moving image across three exhibition spaces that will form 'infinite loops'.

Fact! Yansong plans to develop the design using 5D digital modelling, which calculates construction time and costs as well as form.

THE TECH ICONS



[Pictures Nigel Young/Foster + Partners, Salar Motahari]

Sharifi-Ha House

Tehran, Iran / nextoffice.ir

What's the story? Neither sticky hot summers nor snowy winters present a problem to this residence by Tehran studio Next Office, which features three rooms that can be rotated by 90°. In warmer months, each swivelling pod folds out to reveal large windows and balconies, but when the temperature drops they're all brought back flat for residents to stay warm and cosy.

Fact! The pods' motorised turntables use the same system found in theatre sets and car exhibitions.

3D Print Canal House

Amsterdam, Holland / 3dprintcanalhouse.com

What's the story? In March 2014, DUS architects started a three-year project to print a Dutch canal house. In the process, they hope to discover the materials and methods that will help 3D-printed housebuilding become the standard for environmentally friendly architecture. The concrete-reinforced plastic blocks are being spat out by a 'Room Maker' as we speak.

Fact! You can visit and, for a €2.50 entrance fee, get a downloadable audio tour for your smartphone.

New York by Gehry

New York City, USA / newyorkbygehry.com

What's the story? With its rippled steel facade, this skyscraper is the poster child for software that architect Frank Gehry believes will make paper redundant in architecture. Despite the form, which gives all of its 903 apartments a different profile, almost no printed drawings were required – all thanks to a cloud-based system that allows architects and engineers to share digital files and blueprints.

Fact! There are typically thousands of 'change orders' on builds of this scale. This had just eight.

Apple Campus 2

Cupertino, USA (due 2016) / apple.com

What's the story? This US$5 billion office is where Apple will dream up the successors to its Watch, Macs and iThings. Most of the building's electricity will be generated by an onsite power plant boasting a bigger solar array than any other corporate HQ in the world, and over three quarters of the site will be made up of distinctly non-techy greenery.

Fact! The subterranean car park will be fitted with over 300 charging points for electric cars.

THE INTERIOR TECHORATORS

[Pictures Mark Herboth, Paulina Holmgren]

▲Multi elevator system (concept)
thyssenkrupp.com

What's the story?
Moving sideways as well as up and down, this lift brings Willy Wonka's glass elevator one step closer to reality. Doing away with the traditional rope and counterweight, this will be controlled by powerful magnets that will allow several cabins to levitate in one shaft. The company plans to have a working prototype installed by the end of 2016.

Fact! With lifts travelling at five metres per second, you'd never have to wait more than 30 seconds for one to arrive.

△Art Suite: 7.5° Rø, Icehotel
Jukkasjärvi, Sweden / icehotel.se

What's the story?
Every year the Icehotel commissions 15 artists to hand-carve 'art suites' for its winter season. This one, inspired by Danish astronomer Ole Christensen Rømer, stacks up blocks of ice to create a vortex and the illusion of infinity. It'll be open until April, after which the walls will melt and it'll be time to design a new one. Well, it's easier than stripping wallpaper.

Fact! This year's hotel was built from 30,000 tonnes of 'snice' – a mixture of snow and ice sourced from the nearby Tornu River.

●Yotel New York
New York City, USA / yotelnewyork.com

What's the story?
A robot concierge greets you as you arrive at this Times Square hotel. The 'Yobot' takes care of your luggage, while you check yourself in at a digital kiosk. Once you've made it to your room, you can tilt or rotate your circular bed for sleeping, working on your laptop, or just slowly spinning around as you view the Manhattan skyline and boring hotels with non-spinning beds.

Fact! When there aren't any jobs to do, Yobot will perform acrobatics to entertain guests (and taunt hotel porters).

○James B Hunt Jr Library
North Carolina, USA / ncsu.edu

What's the story?
Library bookshelves might have their musty charm, but they're also an inefficient use of space. That's why the North Carolina State University built a robotic retrieval system, which lets you choose from over two million books and get them robo-fetched. The university also boasts a 3D-printing workshop, interactive walls and a dedicated gaming lab.

Fact! The bookBot system takes up five storeys, compared with the old system of 45 for the same number of books.

◀London Cityscape
€1057 / chiselandmouse.com

Model houses? Pathetic. A true megalomaniac settles for nothing less than a framed plaster cityscape. This modelling company is currently taking orders for London's skyline. They'll even make a model of your house if you ask nicely (and pay them €1400).

◀Scottish Tenement Kit
€30 / finchandfouracre.co.uk

Not everyone wants to build the Guggenheim or the Eiffel Tower. For something a little more humble, try this card-and-glue tenement block. It comes with all the equipment you need to build a red or blonde sandstone abode for your tiny Victorian workers.

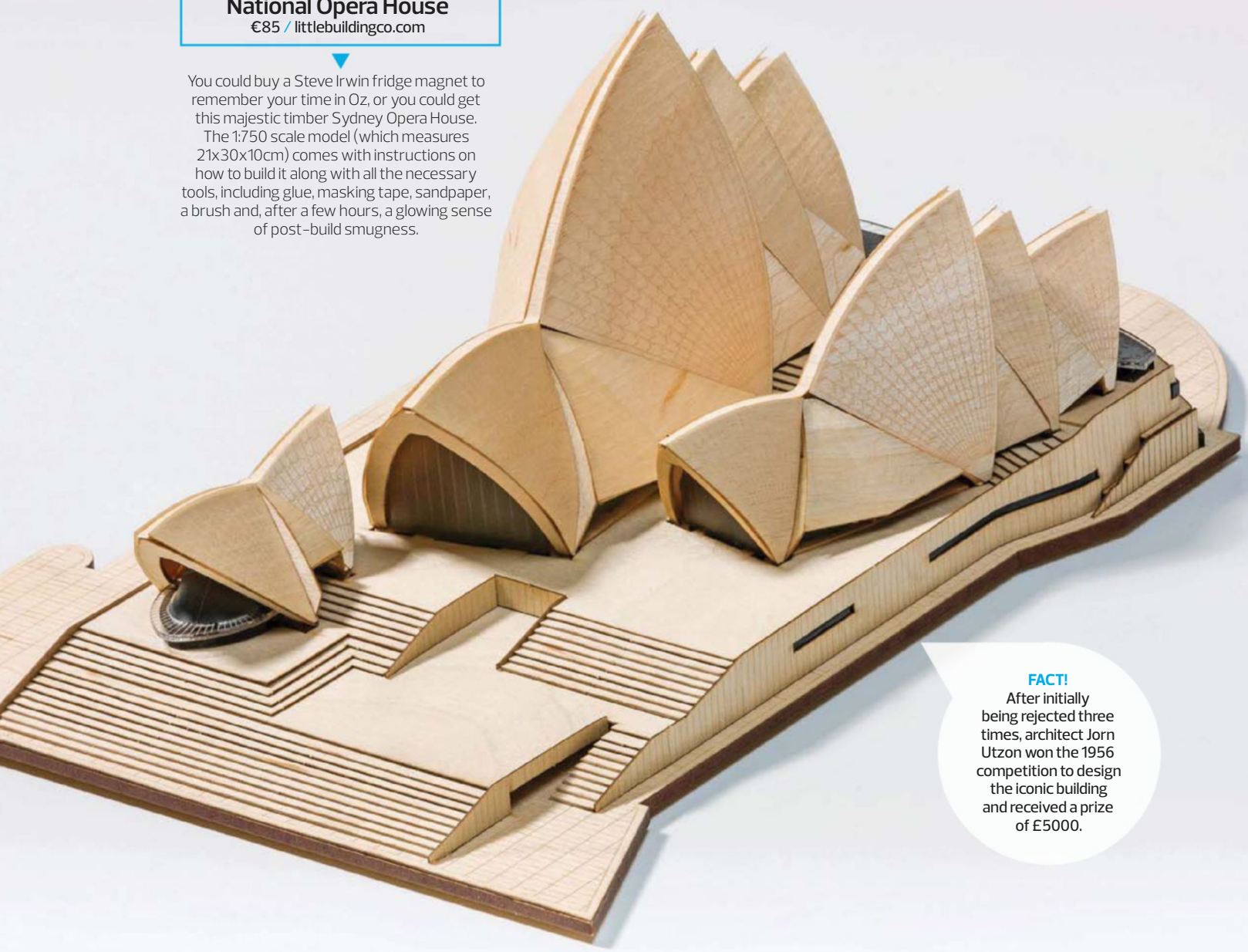
GREATEST KITS

Why should architects have all the tower-building fun? Here are the world's best constructions for the rest of us

National Opera House

€85 / littlebuildingco.com

You could buy a Steve Irwin fridge magnet to remember your time in Oz, or you could get this majestic timber Sydney Opera House. The 1:750 scale model (which measures 21x30x10cm) comes with instructions on how to build it along with all the necessary tools, including glue, masking tape, sandpaper, a brush and, after a few hours, a glowing sense of post-build smugness.



FACT!
After initially being rejected three times, architect Jorn Utzon won the 1956 competition to design the iconic building and received a prize of £5000.

Arckit

from €126 / arckit.com

Hate following instructions? This modular kit, originally designed for architects, lets you construct the house of your dreams, then knock it down and start again. It comes in three sizes and includes adhesive sheets to print off in different textures for added realism.

PopUpHouse

€poa / popup-house.com

Incredibly, the only tool you need to assemble this full-size earth-friendly abode is a screwdriver. It uses wooden screws, insulated blocks and laminate veneer lumber to create a recyclable, energy-efficient and customisable structure. Quite a project for Lego fans.

Media hoard

Gunmen old and new, spacecraft real and imaginary, and music soft and crunchy make up this month's crop of aesthetic offerings

WATCH

American Sniper _Blu-ray

If there are two American directors who know how to make a war movie, it's Steven Spielberg and Clint Eastwood. Both have the requisite experience and hardened eyes that allow them to share the diabolical consequences of war. In the case of *American Sniper* though, it's the moments of downtime between war tours that really define Bradley Cooper's character. Portraying real-life hero Chris Kyle, he hasn't just piled on the pounds for this role, but also absorbed his mental state, earning him an Oscar nomination. Shot on digital format, the transfer to Blu-ray is as clean as can be and captures the grittiness of blood-stained Hummers and its occupants in stunning detail.

What really makes this disc stand out from the crowd is the audio though. One of the first mainstream releases to feature a Dolby Atmos track, if you do have the luxury of height speakers, it will pull you right into the streets of Iraq. Skilfully mixed to add ambience and explosion effects directly above your listening position, it is a revelation and a must-listen experience. Of course, the regular Dolby Digital 7.1 mix is available too and a few bonus features to keep you engaged even after the movie's moving coda. This may not warrant repeated viewings, but makes for must-see disc nevertheless.

Nishant Padhiar

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

Jupiter Ascending _Blu-ray

Sci-fi movies require a minimum suspension of disbelief to believe in the script, but here, all you do is strap yourself to the seat and hope your hands don't tear your hair out. The Dolby Atmos soundtrack is great though and the picture quality reference grade, but how many times will you watch it until it all starts making sense?

Nishant Padhiar

STUFF SAYS ★★☆☆☆

Blackhat _Blu-ray, DVD, VOD

This stylish tale of hackers hacking hackers seems a tad simplistic at times but it dodges most cybercrime clichés. Chris Hemsworth is a binary-code Bourne, equally happy armed with a gun as a keyboard – and it's his trigger finger that becomes his key asset. Given the potentially dry subject matter, that's probably for the best.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★☆☆

LISTEN

My Love Is Cool_Wolf Alice

When grunge ruled the world in the early '90s the four members of Wolf Alice weren't even born. Listening to their early EPs you'd never have guessed it, but if that wave of Seattle-tinged hype brings you to *My Love Is Cool*, you won't find the tribute record you might expect.

That's not to say those influences aren't clear: *You're A Germ* has the shout-along charm of textbook Hole, while *Giant Peach* is Sleater-Kinney gone krautrock, but it's a record that's far poppier and more varied than that. There's an Ellis-Bextor Englishness to Ellie Rowsell's vocals, which go from breathy whisper to riot-grrrl scrawl. Just when you think you've got Wolf Alice sussed, they twist off in another direction.
Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★★☆

A Dream Outside_Gengahr

This is quite nice. It's bright and crunchy melodic indie rock with some interesting dynamics, and quavery falsetto vocals that sound like a nervous pixie asking for a pay rise. At times it recalls MGMT, but with twinkly guitars instead of lush synths... and, aside from a couple of duffers near the end, much more imaginative songcraft.
Richard Purvis

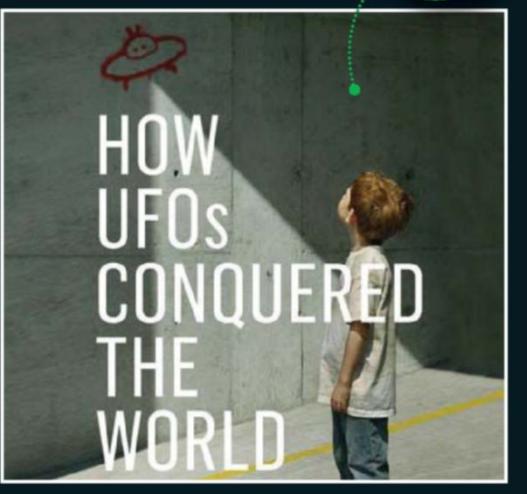
STUFF SAYS ★★★★☆

Get To Heaven_Everything Everything

Everything Everything continue to impress with their own brand of electro-flecked indie rock by packing laptop beats, frantic drumming and the unmistakable falsetto of Jonathan Higgs. You'll find yourself mumbling along to *Spring/Sun/Winter/Dread* but be careful trying to sing along with *To The Blade*.
Kyle Pittman

STUFF SAYS ★★★★☆

READ



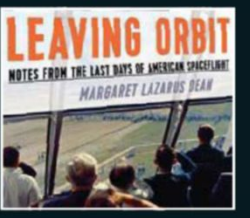
How UFOs Conquered The World_David Clarke

Smartphone cameras haven't exactly sparked an explosion of convincing UFO videos. Could it be that flying saucers and their ilk are a 20th-century human syndrome that reflected the pop culture of their time?

That's the argument of this fascinating book by Dr Clarke, a childhood believer turned UFO journalist. Critical without belittling its many eyewitnesses, it revisits major UFO events to show how films like *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* and the Cold War primed Western minds for the idea of being watched over by shy aliens.

It's a fine read – even for Mulder types who still want to believe.
Mark Wilson

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



Leaving Orbit_Margaret Lazarus Dean

Dean is a NASA nerd, but in the most charming way. Her stories and enthusiasm are what give this ode to the end of the Space Shuttle programme its endearing personality. This is a history lesson with heart and wide-eyed wonder, and any space fan will appreciate its optimism for the future.
Tom Parsons

STUFF SAYS ★★★★☆

Eyes Wide Open! 100 Years Of Leica Photography_Hans-Michael Koetzle

Few brands are as iconic as Leica. This coffee-table book claims it invented fashion photography, the avant-garde, the world as we know it... Fortunately, it's also packed with great photos which say more than the words ever could.
Marc McLaren

STUFF SAYS ★★★☆☆

NDTV PRIME AUTO
MOTOR HEADS
THE BEST MINDS FROM MOTOWN · LEADERS FROM THE WORLD OF THE AUTOMOBILE · CEOs WHO LEAD FROM THE FRONT · ENGINEERS & MANAGEMENT WIZARDS · PASSIONATE BRILLIANT INCISIVE & ARTICULATE · THOUGHT LEADERS · GLOBAL & INDIAN MANUFACTURERS
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6:30 PM MINDSPACE
7:00 PM PROPERTY
8:00 PM TECH
8:30 PM AUTO
9:00 PM ENTERTAINMENT
10:00 PM COMEDY
10:30 PM STRIP MOVIES

Stuff

PROJECTS

MAKE. DO. UPGRADE.

p78

BETA YOURSELF: CYCLING

Cycling in the rain can be buckets of fun, we tell you how to do it

p80

BETA YOURSELF: GADGET SECURITY

Gadgets are your little soldiers. Here's the armour you need for them

BETA YOURSELF

RAINCYCLE

We've shown you many ways and places to commute on your beloved two wheels with pedals. Now we want you to do all of that and ride majestically in the rains...

FIRST STEPS

■ **Suit up.** It would be suicidal to ride a bicycle in the rain or even otherwise, without proper riding gear that protects your Humpty Dumpty self from having a great big fall and getting wet. Wet is cold, cold is sick, sick is doctor. More on this on the next page.

■ **Know the danger.** Riding in the rain is dangerous. Especially in our dear country, where there are almost no bicycle lanes and other vehicles feel like giant monsters waiting to devour you. So you better read these two pages thoroughly.

■ **Appsalutely essential.** The last thing you want is to get stuck in traffic. Using regular apps like Google Maps can save you the agony of a traffic jam.

■ **Not for beginners.** If you are a novice, we suggest you look away right now. Riding in the rain takes some experience and if you're not confident, don't try. Your subscription is valuable to us. Stay alive, dear reader.

■ **Practice makes perfect.** However, if you want to take a dip in the rainy world with your bike, start in your compound or parking lot while it's raining. Go at a slow pace first and practice cornering and braking.

■ **Get routed.** Before you set out on your rainy adventure, know your route. It helps to know if there are cycle workshops on the path you take in case there's a mishap.

RAIN RIDING TIPS

■ **Slow and steady...** don't fall down. Probably the first rule when it comes to riding in the rain is to go slow. You never know when you might have to break hard and doing that in wet conditions will surely make Jack break his crown.

■ **Mirror mirror on the bike.** Not having rear-view mirrors on the bicycle might be a regular thing, but riding in the rains is risky business and it is always better to look before you leap. So get to your local cycle shop and get those mirrors installed.

■ **Stay away.** Keep a safe distance from other vehicles while riding in the rain. Vision is limited and trucks and buses might not even notice a puny bicycle riding alongside them. To avoid accidents, always signal way in advance before turning or stopping. Filtering is a no-no.

[**Words** Kaizad Billimoria]

GEAR YOU UP

■ **Jack the jacket.** Wearing a T-shirt while riding a bicycle in the rain is a bad judgment call. Might we suggest the lovely Decathlon City Rain Jacket 500 (₹5499 /decathlon.in).

■ **Shoesies.** You can't cycle in flipflops. Get a decent pair of riding shoes or something like the Shoe Cover 300 from Decathlon, or the simpler Boot Cover (₹799 / royalenfield.com).

■ **Helmet.** The most important part of your gear is your helmet. For the rainy season, you need something like the Full Face 700 (₹3399 / decathlon.in).

GEAR BIKE UP

■ **Tire tyres.** Your tyres connect you to the tarmac and for them to keep you rubber-side down, you'll need to keep your tyre pressure slightly lower than normal for extra grip.

■ **Lights aboard.** It gets as gloomy as Adele's heart during the rains and visibility is low. Adding lights to the bike enables you to see and be seen. Helmet lights are also a great option.

■ **Guards! Mud.** Having muck and dirt full of gutter residue on yourself is not a pleasant feeling. Get clip-on fenders and do everyone a favour.

TOOLS IN CASE

■ **Punctures.** A puncture in the rain feels like a really bad break up. It makes grown men cry. Save yourself the agony and get the Parktool Patch Kit (₹140 / bumsonthesaddle.com).

■ **Tubes and tools.** Sometimes the puncture repair kit might not cut it. Carry a spare inner tube and a small hand pump. You also get self-repair tubes.

■ **First aid to the aid.** Your kit should have a crepe bandage and waterproof Band-Aid with a small Dettol bottle and cotton at least. It is the bare minimum.

LEVEL UP WITH...

THE LUBES
OIL AND WAX
Anything not painted or treated with anti-rust on your bicycle will start to rust. So apply a coat of anti-rust and you can use clear nail polish for the small bolts and nuts. Keeping the muck off your chain is also very important and the Finish Line Degreaser (₹760 / bumsonthesaddle) does a great job. Also use Park Tool Synthetic Blend Chain Lube for chain lubrication.

THE EXTRA PROTECTION
ARMOR AND PADS
Jackets and helmets are good protection, but when things get slippery, whether on the road or in life, you need a tad extra. The extra protection can save you agony and pain that can last a lifetime. Protecting your knees and elbows with guards such as the Elbow Guard 500 (₹1999 / decathlon.in) can save your precious joints from cracking if you fall.

THE NUTRITION
BARS AND DRINKS
Keep yourself hydrated and have a stock of some nutrition bars with you. Yoga Bars (`450 for 15 bars) can be bought from bumsonthesaddle.com. Your local sports shop will also have these bars. If you require water throughout your commute, no, don't drink rain water, get the BTWIN 500 Water Bladder (₹999 / decathlon.in).

BETA YOURSELF

SECURE YOUR DIGITAL LIFE

Hacks, cracks and malware attacks... It sure is the Wild West out there. But with a few simple tricks and a little bit of caution, it's not that difficult to stay safe even when wandering about the rougher parts of the online world!

THE WI-FI WISHLIST

Use the right encryption

Unencrypted networks make it easy for others to sniff out whatever you do online. Log on to your Wi-Fi router to make sure you're using 'WPA2-AES secure' encryption which makes it very difficult for nosy eavesdroppers to spy on your activities.

Turn off the extras

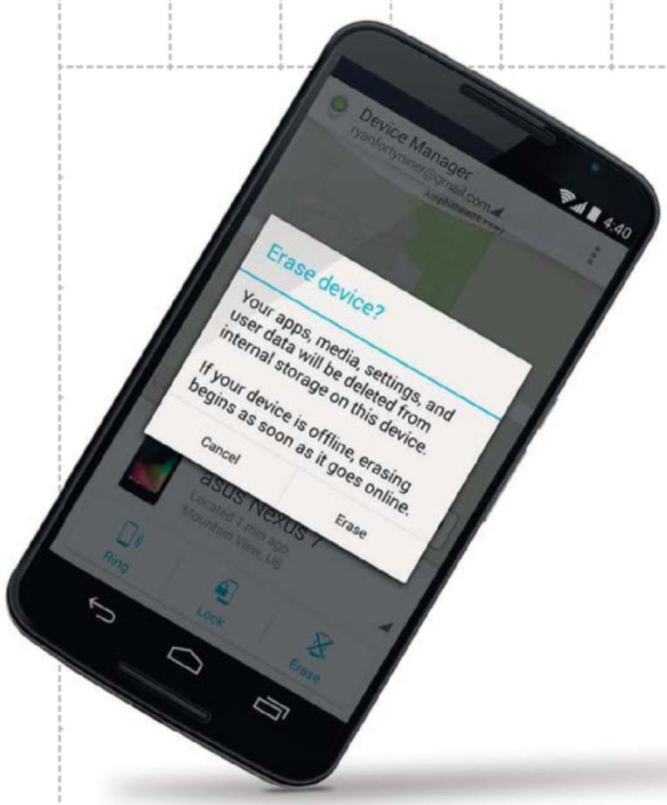
Features like 'Port Forwarding' and 'UPNP' might have their uses, but for most people, they're not only unnecessary, but also make the network more vulnerable to hackers. Play it smart and turn off any features you don't think you'll be using.

Whose network is it?

Are you sure the airport Wi-Fi you're connecting to is the official network? Or has it been set up by someone hoping to steal your credit card data or your email password? Remember, always be careful about connecting to new or unknown networks.

The VPN shield

A Virtual Private Networking service like OpenVPN (openVPN.net) is a great option for anyone who might want to use hotel or airport Wi-Fi while travelling but wants to make sure that whatever they do online cannot be seen by others.



SMARTPHONE SENSIBILITY

Stick to the store

Getting apps from shady sources (aka 'sideloading') might seem to be a convenient way of getting the latest games for free, but you're risking a nasty malware attack as you can't really trust the files you download. Stick to the official app stores and you should be okay. But even then, only install apps that are either popular or are from well-known developers.

Turn on encryption

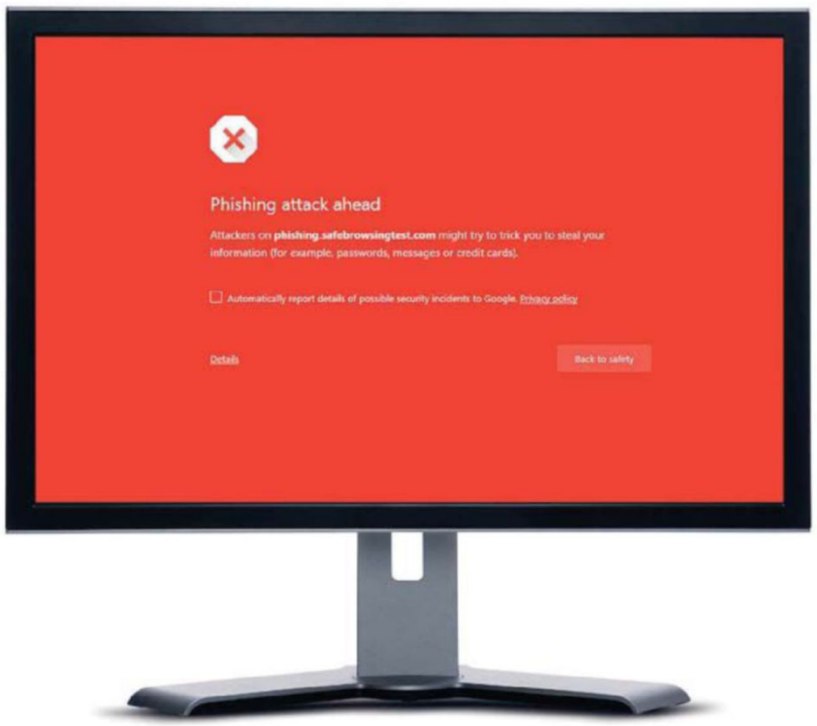
Most iOS devices from recent years are encrypted by default, so even if you lose your phone, others can't access your personal data. Yup, even Apple can't take a peek! If you're using an Android phone, you'll have to enable encryption on your own, by digging into your phone's settings. But all the encryption in the world is only going to be effective if you've put a passcode on your device.

Watch the permissions

If you're wondering why on earth a simple flashlight app needs to access your contacts list or the microphone, you're not alone. In many cases, you can find alternative apps that have a far more sensible approach to accessing your data. Also, if you're on Android, think twice before okaying an app's request for Device Administrator status.

Track 'em down!

iOS and Android both offer track-your-phone functions. iOS users can trace their devices via Apple's iCloud service, while Android users can use Google's Android Device Manager website or app. Lost your new tablet or smartphone? Track it down, make it ring, and even wipe it clean from afar. There, now no one else can see your horribly cheesy selfies. Phew!



THE COMPUTER CONUNDRUM

Shiny new OS
Keep your Operating System updated as newer 'exploits' are always being discovered. Don't risk running an old OS that's not patched with the latest security updates.

Careful where you go
Unexplained popups and mysterious browser bars? Looks like someone's been to the shady parts of the web! Steer clear and turn on your web browser's malware alerts!

Pirates ahoy!
Pirated apps are one of the most common ways of getting infected with malware. Don't be that person! Stick to using licensed and genuine apps, and you should be safe.

The antivirus brigade
Windows users, don't forget to install a reputed antivirus such as F-Secure (f-secure.com) along with an on-demand malware scanner like Malware Bytes Free (mbam.org).

Watch that USB
USB sticks have to be the greatest thing since sliced bread. But they're also prime carriers of malware. Always scan any USB drive or hard disk you plug into your laptop.

Always backup
Malware can destroy your photos and documents. Stay safe by using Time Machine (Mac) or File History (Windows) to back up all those memories you never want to lose.

PHEAR THE PASSWORD

Complex creations
Passwords that are short or are based on common words are easy to crack. Use at least 13 characters, with a mix of upper and lower case, numbers and even special characters.

Mum's the word
Facebook or your bank will NEVER ask for your password or credit card details, so if you do get any calls or emails, please don't say a word as it's definitely a phishing attempt.

The second factor
Whenever possible, enable 2-factor security, which asks for a code (sent via SMS) along with your password. Yup, now hackers can't do anything even if they know your password.

Password managers
Too many passwords? Please don't write them down where your nosy co-workers can see 'em. Instead, use a password manager or browser plugin like LastPass (lastpass.com).

LEVEL UP WITH...

THE DEVICE
BLACKPHONE
$629 / amazon.com
Keep the NSA at bay with the Blackphone. Military-grade encryption keeps your calls and messages hidden from prying eyes, while PrivatOS makes sure no one can can spy on what you do online.

THE BOOK
FUTURE CRIMES
₹524 / amazon.in
Get the scoop on digital crime with Internet security expert Marc Goodman's best-selling book. Marvel at what modern tech has made possible and fear what could lie in the near future.

THE WEB
HAVEIBEENPWNED
haveibeenpwned.com
Yet another popular online messaging service hacked? Hop over to haveibeenpwned.com to check if you're amongst the poor chaps who'll have to change their password. Hurry!

THE APP
THE TOR BUNDLE
₹free / torproject.org
There's a reason why whistleblowers and activists in repressive regimes love the Tor browser – it's simply the best bet for anyone serious about staying anonymous online.

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO TO PLAY?

From mountains to megacities and small islands to giant planets, there are few things more satisfying than building your own world. *Stuff* meets the creators of next year's most exciting virtual realms...

NO MAN'S SKY

PS4, PC

Grant Duncan
Art Director, Hello Games

"*No Man's Sky* is the game that we wanted to play when we were kids. We wanted to make a universe that feels different: something full of hope and wonder that's always fresh, and that you want to go out and explore. We also wanted to make it believable – not realistic, because it needs to inspire wonder – but it can be very easy to slip into crazy, silly stuff, like blobby tentacle beasts. We want you to feel that each planet you explore is a real place."

THE WITCHER III: WILD HUNT
PC, PS4, Xbox One

Monika Zawistowska
Senior Concept Artist, CD Projekt RED

"Since the Skellige archipelago is partially inspired by the Viking/Nordic architecture and mythos, my most prominent inspiration was Viking longships. The longship you see is built from parts of longboats that crashed near island shores. The bow was inspired by Byzantine dromons and the Greek bireme. All in all, the whole thing is intended to project a feeling of being a warship with a bit of an adventurous past."

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA
Wii U

Eiji Aonuma
Producer, Nintendo

"It's quite a vast world, isn't it? You can even reach those mountains in the distance, if you walk far enough. We couldn't create such a wide world like this in the past. You can enter any area from any direction – so the puzzle-solving in this game begins the moment the player starts to think about where they want to go, how they will get there, and what they will do when they arrive."

TOM CLANCY'S THE DIVISION

Xbox One, PS4, PC

Fredrik Rundqvist
Executive Producer, Ubisoft Massive

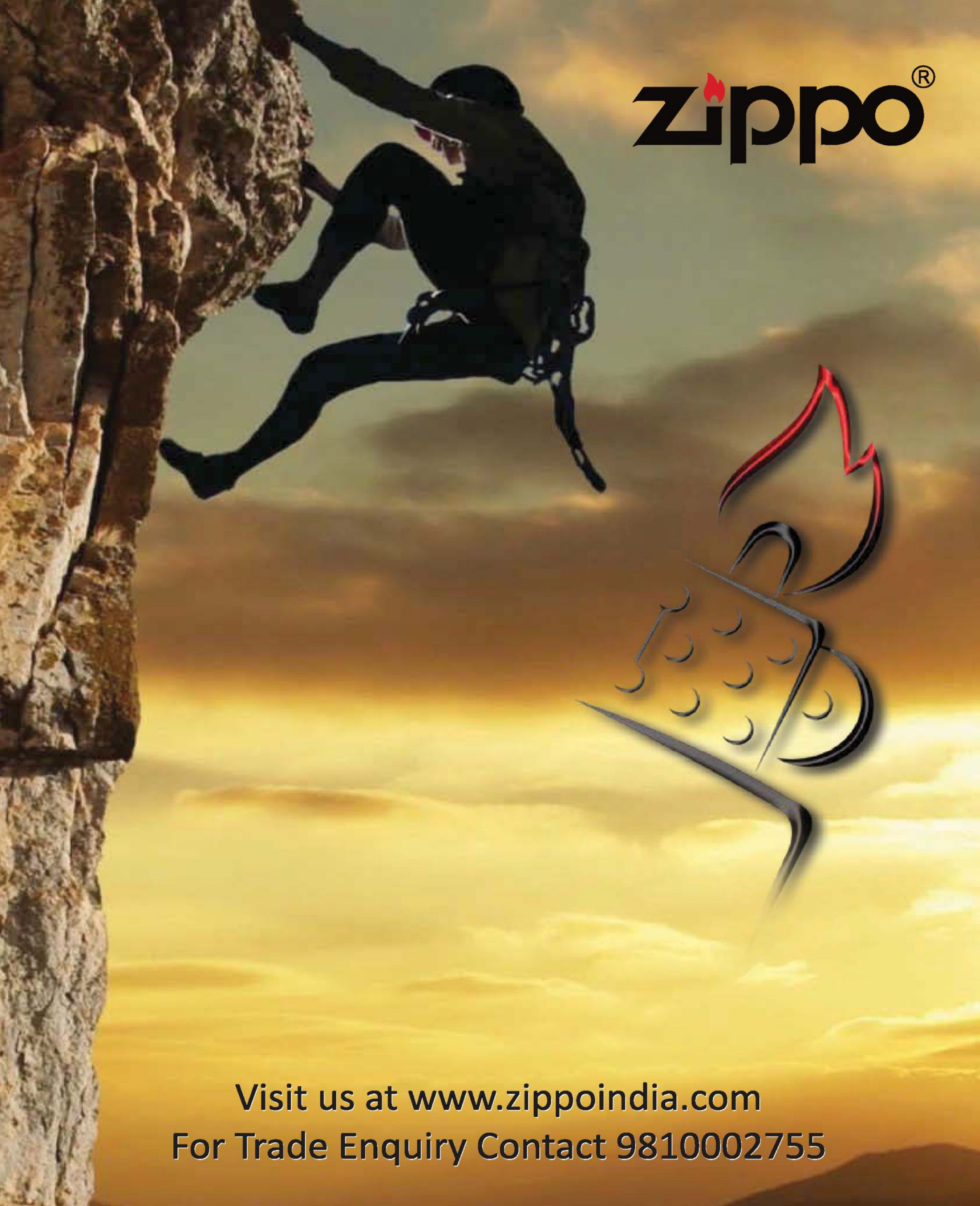
"There's a virus released upon New York City on Black Friday, and it has quickly devastated the city. It's quarantined, all the basic services are shut down, people are dying and desperate and you have factions rising — either to take advantage of the situation or simply to survive. They're fighting for the scraps that are left in the city, and you're an agent of the Division, asked to go in and fix it, to take it back."

Connected Digital World on YouTube

UNCHARTED 4: A THIEF'S END
PS4

Emilia Schatz
Lead Game Designer, Naughty Dog

"When Drake arrives on the island, the distant mountain is the first thing he sees. We use it as a design device, providing a goal to draw in the player, but also as they explore and their path twists and turns, they have a fixed point to orient themselves. So we needed it to be iconic, but also to describe the character of the island: both menacing and enticing at the same time. We want players to see a world full of possibility and intrigue that they long to be part of."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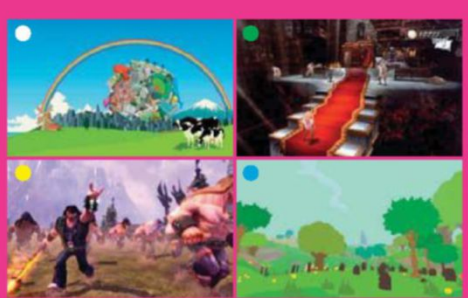
THE WITNESS
PS4, PC, iOS

Orsi Spanyol
Artist/Designer, Thekla Inc

"*The Witness* is set on an abandoned island full of strange puzzles. It's a quiet, somewhat surreal collection of different environments. The colourful, impressionistic style of the art was developed to create a pleasant, meditative space the player can really enjoy exploring. While the assets use minimal detail, they stay true to nature to create believable spaces. It is a place full of challenges and secrets, waiting to be discovered."



WHERE ON EARTH AM I? STRANGEST GAME WORLDS

Katamari Damacy (2004)
The off-kilter locales drive the action in this oddball gem, in which you roll up everything — from lipstick to buildings — into a giant ball and send it into space.

Catherine (2011)
A philandering half-naked man has nightmares of climbing endless block ladders as the world crumbles beneath his feet. Terrifying.

Brutal Legend (2009)
A whimsical and weird fantasy world inspired by heavy metal music and album covers, with a guitar-swinging hero voiced by Jack Black? Yeah, that'll make the cut.

Proteus (2013)
The pixellated 3D natural world of this exploration game holds secrets: with the right conditions, you can change the season. But without any guidance, can you figure out how?

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Stuff TOP TEN OF EVERYTHING

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1 HOT BUY

Samsung Galaxy S6

This is a new era for Samsung, with a smart upgrade that fixes not just things that were amiss in the Galaxy S5, but things that have plagued them for years. No plastic here: its front and back are super-tough Gorilla Glass 4, its sides aluminium. In terms of ergonomics and speaker quality, HTC still wins, but only just. And in the more important areas of camera performance, screen tech and raw power, the Galaxy S6 tramples its rival. We just wish it had a microSD slot.

STUFF SAYS
Samsung has proven its critics wrong – the Galaxy S6 is the new benchmark for flagship phones

from ₹49,900 ★★★★★

2		**Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge** The Edge, with its wraparound screen, is the ultimate money-no-object phone. It's techier and beefier than its brother, but it's also a good deal pricier. Its curvy USP may be more about style than anything else, but come on, it's pretty darned cool.	from ₹58,900 ★★★★★	BEST FOR CUTTING-EDGE GADGETEERS
3		**Motorola Moto Turbo** It's the most complete package out there. It's smart, fast, and it's a handset crafted so beautifully, you'll find yourself picking it up often for no reason whatsoever sometimes. It's priced rather competitively too, given those impressive specs.	₹41,999 ★★★★★	BEST FOR BANG FOR THE BUCK
4		**Motorola Moto X** Smart, fast and beautifvully crafted: Motorola's software works together seamlessly to make your life that bit easier and the brilliant Bamboo option sets it apart from any other top-spec smartphone out there. This feels like a phone that's built for everyone.	from ₹29,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR BUILD AND POWER
5		**HTC One M8** After a few months at the top of the charts, the HTC One M8 is outdone by the brilliant new Moto X. But that doesn't make it any less capable as a smartphone, thanks to its all-metal build, Ultrapixel camera and beautiful Sense 6.0 skin. We still love you, M8.	₹49,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR BUILD AND POWER
6		**LG G3** LG surprises us again. There's barely a single thing wrong with the G3... and so, so much that's right. Upgrades range from sleeker back buttons to the bigger, better 2K screen and laser-assisted camera. And it still lasts 15 hours. How do they do it?	from ₹52,000 ★★★★★	
7		**Apple iPhone 6** With its slim, deeply attractive build and software overhaul, the iPhone 6 is the freshest-feeling iPhone in years. Its larger screen is big enough to be a useful improvement, with gorgeous colours, and this is Apple's best-ever battery.	from ₹53,500 ★★★★★	
8		**Sony Xperia Z3 Compact** Okay, so there wasn't any Z2 Compact in the middle, but the Z3 Compact is here now to give you a powerful-yet-conveniently-sized smartphone. It's everything the Z3 is, except for the smaller 4.6in 720p display. Take that, iPhone 6.	₹38,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR DAINTY HANDS
9		**OnePlus One** Believe the hype. To get one of the best smartphones on the planet, you don't need ₹50,000 any more. You just need an invite. In terms of design, performance, screen and battery life you simply can't get better than this for anywhere near ₹25,000.	₹21,999 ★★★★★	BEST FOR VALUE FOR MONEY
10		**Motorola Moto G (2014)** When the specs go up but the price comes down, you know Motorola means business. The new Moto G makes some improvements over the 2013 variant, including a bigger screen, better cam and stereo front speakers, all while dropping the price. Brilliant VFM.	₹10,999 ★★★★★	BEST FOR RECESSION - BUSTI NG

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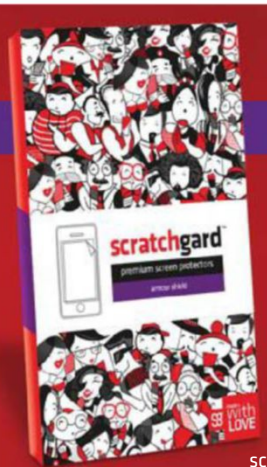

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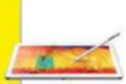
1 HOT BUY

Apple iPad Air 2

The iPad Air didn't really need to be thinner, but that doesn't mean 6.1mm isn't mighty impressive. This combines with reassuring weight and impeccable build quality to make this the most desirable tab on the planet. While the display is the same Retina resolution as before, clever screen tech brings the pixels closer to the surface, and the whole experience is even faster than before thanks to the new A8X chip. Basically it's the best tablet in the world made even better.

STUFF SAYS
Thinner, lighter and mightier: Apple's iron-fisted reign at the top of the tablet charts continues unabated

from ₹35,900 ★★★★★

2		**Apple iPad Mini 2 With Retina Display** The iPad Mini 3 is out now but all it adds is Touch ID. The good news is that the Mini 2 is now down to ₹21,900, which is frankly bargain-tastic. That's why the 'old' model makes it to our Top 10 – if you're after a mini-tablet of quality, your choice has just got easier.	from ₹21,900 ★★★★★	
3		**Samsung Galaxy Tab S 10.5** Samsung has blessed the Galaxy Tab with one of the best tablet screens we've ever laid eyes on, plus an impressive camera and some incredible stamina – but there are performance niggles and Apple's tablet app selection is still far superior.	₹38,900 ★★★★★	BEST FOR MAGAZINES AND MOVIES
4		**Microsoft Surface Pro 3** At last, Microsoft has delivered on the promise of the tablet-cum-laptop hybrid. It proves there's space in the world for a design that's more productive than an iPad or Galaxy Note, but easier to hump around than a traditional laptop.	from ₹61,267* ★★★★★	BEST FOR USING ANYWHERE
5		**Asus Transformer Book T100** This 10.1in tab-and-dock combo has enough grunt to run full Win 8.1 thanks to Intel's new Baytrail CPU. The 1366x768 screen is a good'un, with crisp text, great contrast and colours that pop, while dual-band Wi-Fi and a day-long battery are also welcome.	from ₹26,000 ★★★★★	BEST FOR WINDOWS LOYALISTS
6		**Google Nexus 9** The design isn't as pristine, but this is a real Android contender to rival the iPads. You get the new Android 5.0 Lollipop software, bags of power and a super-sharp display. With 12 hours of video play and two front-facing speakers, it'll be a great film buddy.	from ₹28,900 ★★★★★	
7		**Samsung Galaxy Tab S 8.4** Samsung's superb screen, design, performance and a wider selection of optimised apps mean that against many other Android tabs it's still a winner. However, the new low price for the iPad Mini 2 makes the Galaxy Tab S 8.4 look rather pricey.	₹27,900 ★★★★☆	
8		**Lenovo ThinkPad Tablet 2** You're a high flyer. You have work to do and neither iOS or Android has the oomph. You need the Windows 8 Pro-running Tablet 2. It lasts all day, is powerful enough for full-fat desktop software and with the keyboard dock it's an ultraportable laptop.	₹50,000 ★★★★☆	BEST FOR DESKTOP VERSATILITY
9		**Sony Xperia Tablet Z** Sony just refuses to play by the rules. Stretching its stylish Xperia Z smartphone out to 10in should have made it thicker, but it hasn't; less crisply screened, but it isn't; and not waterproof, but it is. The price for this extreme engineering, however, is high.	₹30,990 ★★★★☆	BEST FOR BATH-BASED TABLET FUN
10		**Samsung Galaxy Note 10.1 (2014)** The new 10.1 is fit to bursting with clever tricks, comes with the note-tastic S Pen and has a stunning 2560x1600 screen. But while we can forgive its tacky looks, minor performance glitches deny it that fifth star; we hope firmware updates will fix them.	₹24,990 ★★★★☆	

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HOT BUY

1 Bose SoundTouch 20

All this time, if you wanted a true multi-room system, you had no choice but to go the Sonos way. It took long enough, but we finally have an option, and one that you can buy at your friendly neighbourhood mall with zero effort. The Bose SoundTouch system wirelessly connects with your computer or NAS device and streams directly using your home's Wi-Fi network. Multiple SoundTouch devices mean you can control what you want playing in which room. We love it.

STUFF SAYS
Infinite music in every room without the need for custom installers? Sign us up now, please
₹33,638 ★★★★★

2		**Naim Mu-so** ₹1,00,000 for a wireless speaker?! Well yes, but what a wireless speaker it is. Naim has ploughed all of its high-end hi-fi experience into delivering a beautifully made, great-sounding device with AirPlay, streaming and aptX Bluetooth all on-board.	₹1,00,000* ★★★★★	BEST FOR ONE-BOX WI-FI HI-FI
3		**Monitor Audio Airstream S200** It may look a bit like a floppy skyscraper, but the Monitor Audio's Bluetooth-plus-AirPlay speaker makes a lot of sense, mostly because it takes up very little shelf/desk/table space but makes loads of lovely noise. It's a bit of a steal at ₹42k.	₹42,200 ★★★★★	
4		**Cambridge Audio Go** There are loads of very cheap Bluetooth speakers out there, but we reckon it's worth spending that little bit more to get something that's really good – and that's the Go. It sounds awesome, it's really nicely built and its battery lasts a massive 18 hours.	₹12,500 ★★★★★	BEST FOR PICNIC PARTIES
5		**Bluesound Multiroom System** Fancy a bit of Sonos-style multiroom but with better-than-CD-quality sound thrown in? You want a Bluesound. There are all-in-one speakers, adapters for your existing hi-fi, and a Vault that rips and stores all your CDs. All can handle high-resolution audio.	from ₹45,000 ★★★★★	
6		**Bang and Olufsen A9** It's big, it's round and it can look like anything you want it to if you put a front cover on it (we personally like the moon look). It also has a sound that's surprisingly good for a speaker of this shape. So essentially, this art has nice music.	₹2,49,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR DECORATING YOUR LIVING ROOM
7		**Libratone Zipp** A fuzzy, cylindrical, colourful AirPlay dock that will deliver detailed, punchy 360° sound anywhere at all, thanks to a built-in battery that gives it four hours of outdoor life. Direct Wi-Fi skills free you from cables, routers and everything but the boogie.	₹29,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR AL FRESCO PARTIES
8		**Bowers & Wilkins Z2** The baby of B&W's AirPlay range is a little belter, and it adds a proper Lightning dock to Apple's wireless tech. It'll easily fill a small to medium-sized room with chunky bass, punchy beats and lovely, clear vocals. You'll buy it for the look, but love it for the sound.	₹31,500 ★★★★★	
9		**Cambridge Audio Minx Xi** It might not look all that fancy, but the Minx Xi is like that micro system you had at uni, only it gobbles internet music rather than Rage Against The Machine CDs. Just add a pair of quality speakers (try Wharfedale Diamond 220s) and you've got a great hi-fi.	₹55,500 ★★★★★	
10		**Harman Kardon Aura** Similar in looks to the Soundsticks it just replaced in this hallowed list of lists, the Harman Kardon Aura is a one-piece Bluetooth/Wi-Fi/Auxiliary speaker that looks the part and sounds pretty neat, too.	₹34,990 ★★★★★	

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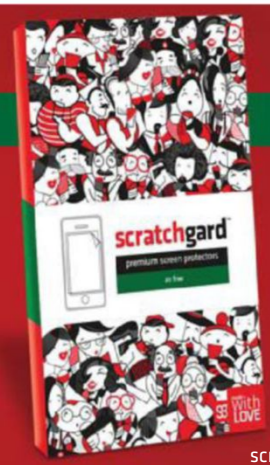

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1 HOT BUY

AKG K451

They've actually been around a little while now, but what's put the K451 on-ears back on to our radar is a real world price of about ₹4999. For that money, they're unbeatable – awesomely agile and punchy sound wrapped up in a subtly stylish and foldable design. Add both standard and three-button control cables for maximising compatibility and there's practically no excuse for not getting brilliant sound from your phone.

STUFF SAYS
Fantastic sound and great portability at an almost unbeatable price. The perfect PMP upgrade
₹4999 ★★★★★

2		**Bowers & Wilkins P5 Series 2** Even the most demanding audio buff would find it hard to fault these – B&W have delivered a pair of premium on-ears that look, feel and sound exquisite. You control playback and volume with your iPhone, while feeling like a VIP guest at an intimate gig.	₹23,500 ★★★★★	
3		**Philips Fidelio M1 MkII** Your commute deserves a quality soundtrack, and second-generation Fidelio M1 headphones give you precisely that. There's oodles of detail to the sound and they punch harder than the Hulk. Beats and their ilk can't touch them.	₹10,999 ★★★★★	
4		**SoundMagic E10S** This is actually the third version of SoundMagic's awesome, affordable in-ears – not that you'd tell by looking. They sound even better, though: a little smoother and more refined, with tight, weighty bass. Plus there's now a mic and button for smartphone use.	₹2349 ★★★★★	
NEW 5		**Sony MDR-EX650AP** If you're prepared to pay a little extra for your in-ears, these Sonys are even better than the SoundMagics above. The sound is that bit bigger, a little more detailed and a little more grown-up, and if you don't like the brass finish, there's a silver version.	₹2490 ★★★★★	
6		**Bose QuietComfort 25** The best kind of silence is the kind you then fill with sweet, sweet music, and that's what the QuietComfort 25s give you. The active noise-cancelling quells office hubbub, air-conditioning and aeroplane hum, and delivers cracking sound in its place.	₹21,263 ★★★★★	BEST FOR SHUTTING OUT THE WORLD
7		**Philips Fidelio M2BT** Building on the award-winning M1BT, Philips has added NFC for its new wireless Bluetooth headphones and swapped the dark blue design for an understated black finish. The smart built-in controls and rich sound performance remain.	₹14,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR GREAT SOUND WITH NO WIRES
8		**Audio-Technica M50x** In their limited edition avatar, these extremely talented cans from AT are a tantalizing mix of style and sound. They'll handle almost every genre of music thrown at them. Tight bass, exceptional detail and a competitive price make these a superb package.	₹14,500 ★★★★★	
NEW 9		**Sol Republic Master Tracks** Really tough things are usually really ugly, which is why the lovely styling of the "virtually indestructible" Master Tracks headphones is so refreshing. Loud, punchy, fast and controlled, the sound is just as attractive as the design. Worth every rupee.	₹13,999 ★★★★★	
10		**Sennheiser Momentum** Classily styled, cushion-comfortable and smooth-sounding, the Momentums are the perfect pair of over-ears for the dapper man about town. New! An On-Ear version – smaller, cheaper at ₹14,990, and available in pink, blue, green and, um, ivory/brown.	₹24,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR QUALITY AND STYLE IN ONE

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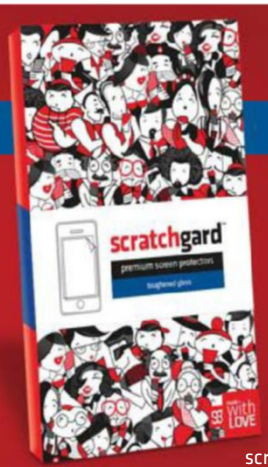

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HOT BUY

1 Sony BDP-S490

A quite remarkable device, this Sony sounds great, has a wonderful picture in 2D or 3D and is crammed with on-demand content including Sony's own Movies Unlimited. It's also one of the most value-for-money Blu Ray players you can buy today, and highlights Sony's complete and total dominance over the technology. It does lack video upscaling, but you don't really need it yet, and the important thing is that it does 1080p extremely well.

STUFF SAYS
The only choice for serious TV, movie or sport addicts, this Sony is the Blu-Ray player you need
₹13,990 ★★★★★

2	**Yamaha YSP-2500** If your only requirement for a soundbar is that it should sound better than your telly, almost any will do; but if you want one that will fool your ears into thinking they're surrounded by actual speakers, you want the amazingly clever Yamaha YSP-2500.	₹1,09,990 ★★★★★	
3	**Sony BDV-N990** The biggest bargain in home cinema, the Blu-ray -packing N990 has a massive spec but a micro price. Picture and sound are excellent, Sony's smart services are immense and its stylish curves and touch-sensitive controls add a dash of premium quality. Brilliant.	₹34,990* ★★★★★	BEST FOR AWESOME ALL-IN-ONE VALUE
4	**BenQ W1400** What's better than *Inception*? *Inception* on a 300in screen, that's what. How do you get a 300in screen in your house? You buy the BenQ W1400. If your lounge isn't quite that big it can also project an 84in image from just 2m away. Try finding an 84in TV for ₹1.5lac.	₹1,50,000 ★★★★★	
5	**Panasonic DMP-BDT220** It's not the most extravagantly specified Blu-ray player around (though Panasonic's remote-control app is a joy), but the BDT220 has the sort of picture- and sound quality to make its price look like a misprint. And that's our favourite kind of mistake.	₹13,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR BLU-RAY ON A BUDGET
6	**Marantz UD7007** Pricey like an Aston Martin is pricey and about as satisfying to own, this Marantz can play any disc you like, streams music at high-def resolutions and can withstand an earthquake. If you really, really take movies and music seriously, this is your player.	₹69,900 ★★★★★	BEST FOR THE ULTIMATE IN QUALITY
7	**Sonos Playbar** A characteristically Sonos take on the soundbar, the Playbar hooks up to your TV via its single optical input and fills your room with a big, detailed sound. And as with all Sonos kit, it can stream your own music files and more as part of a multiroom system.	₹60,000* ★★★★★	BEST FOR STREAMING MUSIC
8	**B&W Panorama 2** Let's put aside the gimmicks for a second and consider what's most important: the sound. That's where the Panorama 2 wins. You get a direct and focused sound, clear dialogue and beautiful design and build, although this is all very expensive.	₹2,11,500 ★★★★★	BEST FOR PREMIUM SOUND
9	**Amkette EVO TV AC/MC** Still quite similar to the old Evo TV, the AC (Android Central) and MC (Media Centre) smart up your dumb TV just like before, and let you access Android and all its apps straight on your TV. They're also much cheaper now.	₹5500 / ₹6500 ★★★★★	BEST FOR SMARTING UP A DUMB TV
10	**Microsoft Xbox 360** The Xbox One will be more media-centric than ever before, but looks like it'll require a post-launch firmware update to really shine. We'll be testing the One's media skills soon, but for now the 360 with its Windows Media Server is still a slick streamer.	from ₹15,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR MULTIMEDIA FUN

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HOT BUY

1 LG 55EC930T

Self-illuminating OLED (organic light-emitting diode) screens used to be full of potential but were criminally expensive. No longer. Behold this curved LG marvel which, for the most part, is no thicker than a pane of glass and verging on affordable. The levels of contrast and dynamism are a revelation. No, it's not 4K. But when 1080p Full HD looks this good, you won't be counting pixels – and it'll be some time before you'll be able to feed your TV a 4K-heavy diet anyway.

STUFF SAYS
4K and millions of pixels might be the future, but this LG OLED is the most amazing TV of right now

₹3,59,900 ★★★★★

2	**Samsung UA55HU7200** Finally, a 4K TV that can be recommended without hesitation, plus it's just as good as a Full HD TV when playing 1080p stuff. Chuck in all of Samsung's usual smart TV whizzbang, remove the silly motion-sensing controls and you've got a real star.	₹2,36,500 ★★★★★	
3	**Sony KDL-50W800B** 4K a bit too new-fangled (or pricey) for you? How about a 50in edge-lit LED LCD with all of Sony's smart features for just over a lakh? It's not even like picture quality's been sacrificed – this is an absolute corker of a telly in every way.	₹1,12,900 ★★★★★	BEST FOR AFFORDABLE BRILLIANCE
4	**Sony KDL-32W700B** There's nothing wrong with sticking with a smaller TV, but you should still make sure you pick a good 'un. This 32in Sony is the best, in terms of both picture performance and features, which include 1080p resolution and all the smart stuff you can handle.	₹44,900 ★★★★★	BEST FOR A SMALLER SCREEN
5	**Samsung UA65HU9000** Till now, you had to choose between curved and 4K. But Samsung believes in packing your TV set full of features, so the HU9000 is the first curved 4K TV. And at 65in, it's also huge. Fun times ahead.	₹4,25,000 ★★★★★	BEST FOR CURVES AND 4K
6	**Sony KD-55X8500B** If you want to jump on the 4K bandwagon with Sony you could go for the wedge-shaped X9, which is great, but we'd suggest that this slimmer, less intrusive 'entry-level' option is an even better buy. It's still got all the smart stuff and great performance.	₹2,34,900 ★★★★☆	
7	**Sony KDL-55W950B** Sony's 'wedge design' gives greater internal volume, which makes the speakers sound better. The excellent colours, motion and sound quality are all great, but it lacks a wow factor and doesn't have the deepest blacks. There should be discounts, though.	₹1,64,900 ★★★★☆	
8	**LG 42LB750T** The performance is very good, but what makes this 42in LG really special is its webOS user interface, which treats all sources, apps, recordings and live broadcasts equally, getting you to the content you want to watch quicker. And isn't that what a TV is for?	₹81,900 ★★★★☆	
9	**Panasonic TH-42AS610** It's not the prettiest, it's not the smartest, and with just two HDMI inputs, it's not the most connected TV about, but there's a really simple, intuitive OS pulling the strings here – and a performance that's very strong given the price and 42in size.	₹59,900 ★★★★☆	
10	**LG 55UB950T** LG's 4K flagship looks gorgeous with 4K content, but the real story here is the Web OS interface, which finally gives a boot up the bottom of TV UIs. This is by far the most pleasant, colourful, multi-task-friendly and downright fun TV there's ever been.	₹2,19,900 ★★★★☆	BEST FOR MAKING TV FUN AGAIN

HOME COMPUTERS

HOT BUY 1		**Apple iMac** Other than regular power upgrades and a bit of slimming, the iMac has been largely unchanged for a while, but it does now run Apple's lovely Yosemite OS. There's also now a more affordable version and an eye-wateringly expensive 4K model.	from ₹91,900 ★★★★★	BEST FOR ALL-ROUND BRILLIANCE
2		**Apple Mac Mini** This tiny PC is still one of the most capable devices in the size group, and is intelligently priced as well. You are going to need to plug in the keyboard, mouse and monitor, but it's a convenient little device that you could slip into your backpack if you need to.	from ₹36,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR COMPACT POWER
3		**Alienware X51 (2014)** The X51 hasn't changed a huge amount, but the wee size matched with powerful components make it perfectly suited to HD gaming. Steam Machines are going to liven this market up but right now it's the best balance of power and form in PC land.	₹tba ★★★★★	
4		**Raspberry Pi Model B+** It's a fully functioning PC that's barely bigger than a credit card, and now it's a little more flexible than before thanks to two extra USB ports and better power management. Don't expect a 'proper' computer – this is for tinkerers after a fun new project.	from ₹2875 ★★★★☆	
5		**Lenovo IdeaCentre A720** The A720's stand mechanism allows that lumbering 27in screen to lie flat, which is ideal for multi-user access to its 10-point multitouch. A quad-core i7 processor gives it plenty of power although the peripherals don't feel quite as well made as we'd like.	from ₹99,990 ★★★★☆	

GAMES CONSOLES

HOT BUY 1		**Sony PlayStation 4** It may not quite be the finished article, but this is the best games machine on the planet. It has whisper-quiet operation, a sleek form and bags of power, with full 1080p on all titles and not a whiff of lag. When proper media streaming arrives, it'll be unstoppable.	₹39,990 ★★★★★	
2		**Microsoft Xbox One** This is very different to the Xbox One of 2013. Most significantly, the unpopular Kinect feature is now out of the deal, allowing Microsoft to drop the price and releasing enough extra power for developers to make their games look and play better.	₹39,990 ★★★★★	
3		**Microsoft Xbox 360** Yes, it's been succeeded by the One, but the years have been kind to the 360. With an amazing catalogue of recent games that use its full potential, brilliant media streaming skills and a low, low price it's impossible not to recommend it to cash-strapped gamers.	from ₹15,990 ★★★★★	BEST FOR BUDGET GAMING
4		**Sony PlayStation 3** The PS3 has been around a while but, like the Xbox 360, that just means it has plenty of great games. Online gaming via PlayStation Network is still brilliant and still free, and it's worth buying for its Blu-ray and media streaming alone.	from ₹16,990 ★★★★★	
5		**Nintendo 3DS XL** The 3D effect may be a gimmick that hasn't paid off, but put that to one side and the 3DS is still the king of the portable games machines. The XL is the biggest version yet, and there's now a massive catalogue of inventive dual-screen games to play.	₹22,990 ★★★★☆	

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PROSUMER CAMS

HOT BUY 1		**Olympus OM-D E-M1** The Olympus flagship is armed with the same excellent 16.3MP sensor as its predecessor the E-M5, but has an improved autofocus system, a startlingly good electronic viewfinder and masses of direct controls. Also look out for the E-M10.	₹1,05,000 (body only) ★★★★★	
2		**Canon EOS 700D** Look, it's a new Canon at No2. No, wait, it's the old one. Actually, it's kind of both. The 700D is a minor upgrade over the 650D, keeping its 18MP sensor, flip-out touchscreen and autofocus during video and adding little beyond a new kit lens. Still great, though.	₹43,995 (body only) ★★★★★	BEST FOR ALL-ROUND VALUE
3		**Sony A6000** Sony's new system camera may be tiny but it packs a big photographic punch. There may be no optical image stabilisation but the incredible speed and accuracy of the A6000's autofocus is a real highlight, as is its large, clear electronic viewfinder.	₹40,990 (body only) ★★★★★	
4		**Nikon D810** The top-end Nikon D810 is a monster camera. Its image quality and performance are hard to fault – if you're a serious photographer willing to stump up the cash then it's a fantastic buy. However, there are some features missing, such as 4K video and Wi-Fi.	₹1,99,950 (body only) ★★★★★	
5		**Sony A7R** We love this camera. It's lightweight but tough and delivers results that outstrip pretty much any other compact system camera on the market. It has a huge full-frame 36.4MP sensor and noise-suppression. Your wallet might weep, but your photo album will sing.	₹1,24,990 (body only) ★★★★★	

COMPACT CAMERAS

HOT BUY 1		**Sony DSC-HX60** 2014's HX60 isn't a huge departure from its predecessor in terms of its build quality, ease of use, specifications and 30x zoom lens – all of which are excellent. What it does add is NFC and a newer Bionz X processor, making it a slightly nippier performer.	₹22,990 ★★★★★	
2		**Sony DSC-RX100 III** If you're looking for the best tiny snapper around, this is it. Excellent image quality, fast autofocus, a useful electronic viewfinder and professional video recording, all squeezed into a truly teeny package that'll fit into your jeans pocket. We're smitten.	₹54,990 ★★★★★	
3		**Fujifilm FinePix X100S** Fujifilm's souped up its fixed-lens retro shooter, with faster focusing and a big APS-C sensor. It's not all new, though, keeping the 35mm-equivalent f/2 lens and hybrid viewfinder from the X100. A less retro version with black finish is now available too.	₹74,999 ★★★★★	
4		**Canon PowerShot G16** The G16 packs a lot into its sturdy body: optical viewfinder, loads of manual controls and an f1.8-2.8, 28-140mm (equivalent) zoom lens. Upgrades over the G15 include Wi-Fi and faster burst shooting of up to 12fps, while image quality is as good as ever.	₹31,995 ★★★★★	
5		**Nikon Coolpix AW120** The ultimate rugged camera: almost indestructible, and fit for temperatures as low as -10°C, it will even survive a rinse cycle in your dishwasher. The AW120 also takes lovely pictures and impressive video in both good lighting and dimmer conditions.	₹17,950 ★★★★★	BEST FOR EXTREME EXPLOITS

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1 HOT BUY NEW

Apple MacBook Pro 13in (2015)

Apple hasn't changed too many parts of the MacBook Pro for 2015. There's a fancy new trackpad and the latest generation of Intel CPUs, which deliver better stamina as well as a chunk more power. This is an incremental upgrade, but given how good the Pro already was, that's more than enough to keep it right at the top of the laptop honours list. If you need power as well as stamina and portability, this is one of the best laptops money can buy.

STUFF SAYS
If it ain't broke... it hasn't radically changed, but the Pro's performance and trackpad are top of its class

from ₹94,900 ★★★★★

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2 NEW

Asus ZenBook UX305

Asus knows what it's doing. It knows that the Apple MacBook Air laptops are treading water and the ZenBook UX305 is pretty much everything the 2015 Air should have been, with its fetching aluminium design and as good a display as any ₹1lac laptop.

from ₹49,999 ★★★★★

3

Microsoft Surface Pro 3

At last, Microsoft has delivered on the promise of the tablet-cum-laptop hybrid. It proves there's space in the world for a design that's more productive than an iPad or Galaxy Note, but easier to hump around than a traditional laptop.

from ₹61,267* ★★★★★

BEST FOR USING ANYWHERE

4

Alienware 17

A brute of a machine in every way, the Alienware 17 weighs as much as four MacBook Airs and probably frags harder than 10 of them. Core i7 Haswell processor at 3.4GHz, Nvidia GeForce graphics, up to 32GB of RAM... Our trigger finger's already itching.

from ₹1,42,390 ★★★★★

BEST FOR SERIOUS GAMERS

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5 NEW

Apple MacBook (2015)

This is no 'Air', nor 'Pro': a clear sign that this is what Apple sees as the future of the ultraportable laptop. And it's certainly very desirable: a 12in lean machine with a superb screen and haptic touchpad. However, the lack of ports can be frustrating.

from ₹72,900 ★★★★★

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6 NEW

Apple MacBook Air 13in (2015)

Apple is scraping by with pretty much the same Air design as before. You get a new processor, new connectors and slightly improved battery life, but still no Retina screen. However, if a portable road warrior is what you're after, this is still a great choice.

from ₹86,900 ★★★★☆

7

Asus Zenbook UX302

Asus has done a wonderful job of creating an ultra-slim laptop that's as far removed from Apple's influence as possible, while maintaining a stylish and unique aesthetic. The 13.3in display is razor-sharp and colourful – this is our favourite Ultrabook.

₹99,999 ★★★★☆

8

Lenovo Yoga Pro 3

The third entry in the Yoga Pro line refines the laptop/tablet hybrid design with a power-sipping new Intel Core M processor plus slimness and style to make even the MacBook Air look worried. And you can stand it up like a tent. If you want.

₹1,14,990 ★★★★☆

9

Acer C720 Chromebook

Bargain Chromebooks are everywhere right now, but the C720 stands out even so. It's well made, well specced (for a Chromebook) and crucially, has proper ports: HDMI, USB3.0 and SD are all here. The HP at No.7 is prettier, but the Acer's the one we'd buy.

₹22,990 ★★★★☆

10

Acer Aspire S7

The Aspire S7 is almost the perfect Ultrabook – it matches the MacBook Air for weight, beats it for slimness by 6mm, and has a gorgeous 1920x1080 touch-friendly screen. Only its battery, which lasted a mere 5hrs on test, prevents it getting that fifth star.

₹1,02,999 ★★★★☆

BEST FOR TOUCHY-FEELY WINDOWS 8

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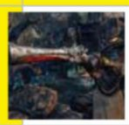
HOT BUY NEW

1 The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt PS4/PC/Xbox One

Weighing up the +12 damage of one sword with the +15% critical chance of another is tedious work, and there are issues with the AI's pathfinding that means your horse seems to get stuck behind just about anything and everything all the flaming time, but these are minor flaws in a game that is otherwise something of a fantasy masterpiece. Only the most RPG-phobic should avoid it – everyone else will find *The Witcher 3* to be one of the finest games of recent memory.

STUFF SAYS
Bigger than Skyrim and with more character, The Witcher 3 is a new RPG benchmark
★★★★★

UPDATE

2		**Bloodborne** PS4 Bloodborne is a tricky beast. It's not for everyone. But if you're looking for something a little different, something that'll really challenge and involve you a bit more than your average eight-hour shoot-a-thon, you need to check it out.	★★★★★	
3		**Far Cry 4** PC/PS3/Xbox 360/PS4/Xbox One Another holiday doesn't quite go to plan in Ubisoft's latest open-world adventure, now with added elephants. *Far Cry 4* is a glorious timesink. The principle attraction is most certainly its campaign, which is easily the best thing about it.	★★★★★	
4		**Grand Theft Auto V** PS3/PS4/Xbox One/Xbox 360 There's a lot about *Grand Theft Auto 5* that remains unchanged, but on the new-gen machines, it's a fantastic experience like never before. The crazy world of Los Santos offers enough thrills to keep gamers coming back for more and more.	★★★★★	
5		**The Last Of Us Remastered** PS3/PS4 Now remastered for PS4, this is the best zombie-apocalypse game ever. It looks magnificent and plays even better, with a moving story and frights aplenty. It's tough... but then a real-life zombie apocalypse would be. Think of this as essential prep.	★★★★★	BEST FOR ZOMBIFIED HORROR
6		**Forza Horizon 2** Xbox One This is everything an open-world driving game should be. There's loads to do and it captures the feeling of driving very fast better than any other racing game, to the point where *Forza Horizon 2* could soon eclipse its older brother once and for all.	★★★★★	
7		**Destiny** PS4/Xbox One This isn't for everyone, and those hoping for an epic *Halo*-style campaign may be disappointed. But in every other way, *Destiny* is on a bigger, far more multiplayer level, and with the added addictive quest for loot like *Diablo* – an irresistible combination.	★★★★★	
8		**FIFA 15** PS4/Xbox One If *FIFA 14* was Barcelona's tiki-taka – death by 1000 passes – then *FIFA 15* is Germany's more explosive World-Cup-winning evolution of it. Harder, faster and stronger: this is a better reflection of modern football than ever before.	★★★★★	
9		**Dying Light** PC/PS4/Xbox One Far Cry 3 x Shadow of Mordor x Dead Island = a bloody enjoyable zombie romp. Jumping around rooftops, playing co-op and bludgeoning zombies is all fun. A solid survival horror in an open-world setting, and we've enjoyed the undead company.	★★★★☆	
10		**Hotline Miami 2: Wrong Number** PC/PS3/PS4/PS Vita Bigger and perhaps a little less focused than its predecessor, with the same bloody, brutal and brilliantly retro gameplay makes it a vital play. A subtle – if occasionally flawed – evolution of a winning formula that'll please old fans and win new ones.	★★★★☆	

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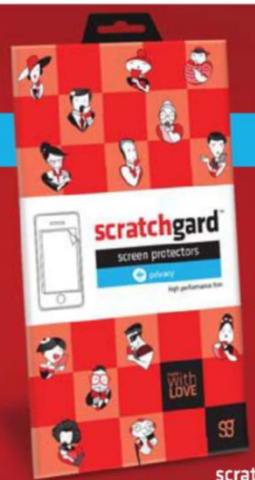

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1 HOT BUY

Pebble Steel

Unveiled at CES 2014, the Steel keeps the straightforward looks, crisp display and five-day battery life that helped the standard Pebble win our hearts. But it holds more RAM, apps and customisable faces this time, and swaps the plastic for either a 'Steel' silver or matte black stylish suit, making it look and feel more like an actual watch. The Steel goes beyond the gimmicks and into the world of real-world wearable tech. Pop it on your wristwear wish-list.

STUFF SAYS
The best smartwatch money can buy... and the original plastic Pebble is still available for a bit less

₹17,500 ★★★★★

2		**Fitbit Flex** The Flex delivers all of Fitbit's activity-tracking smarts but in a form factor that's less fiddly than its belt-clip counterparts. It's packed with Bluetooth, NFC, vibratamotor and an LED display. See also the new Fitbit Charge, with a full display.	₹9499 ★★★★★	BEST FOR TRACKING YOUR LIFE
3		**GOQii Band** A fitness band, it's propreity app and a fitness and habit expert who coaches you to acheive your ideal lifestyle is what you'll be signing onto with GOQii. Get a hands-on idea of your progress via collected physical data, complete with statistical analysis.	from ₹3999 ★★★★★	
4		**Motorola Moto 360** With its iconic, head-turning design, this could be the first wearable you will want to wear. The Moto 360's our favourite and most comfortable Android Wear watch so far, but the battery might make you anxious and it's a few specs short of brilliance.	₹17,999 ★★★★★	
5		**Sony SmartWatch3** The Sony SmartWatch 3 has the brains of a Google watch, coupled with GPS skills for fitness fans, with plenty of power and decent battery life. A waterproof build and GPS powers make this the best fitness smartwatch around.	₹19,990 ★★★★☆	
6		**Roku Streaming Stick** 'Streaming Stick' tells you all you need to know, really: this is a stick, and it streams. It streams plenty, too. And unlike Chromecast, it's also a dab hand with your own video and music files. Lovely stuff.	₹4395 ★★★★☆	
7		**Misfit Shine** The Shine's minimalist exterior redefines fitness trackers. Former Apple CEO and Misfit co-founder John Sculley may have something to do with that. Plus, its fitness and sleep monitoring skills are solid, and a button cell means no recharging. Perfect.	₹9990 ★★★★☆	
8		**Google Chromecast** This USB memory-stick-sized cord-cutter is compatible with YouTube, Google Play movies and more: a cheap, simple way of getting web-sourced movies and shows onto your living-room TV.	₹2999 ★★★★☆	
9		**Samsung Gear Fit** The Gear Fit is small, light and relatively less intrusive, making it the better choice for people who don't care about the extra bells and whistles, or for active types who would find the design of the larger watches unwieldy.	₹8159 ★★★★☆	
10		**TomTom Multi-Sport Cardio** The new version of the TomTom Multi-Sport adds an impressively accurate heart-rate sensor to an already strong formula, allowing for more focused and personal training. It'll track runs, cycles and swims, and the companion app is also much improved.	₹25,000* ★★★☆☆	BEST FOR TRIATHLETES IN TRAINING

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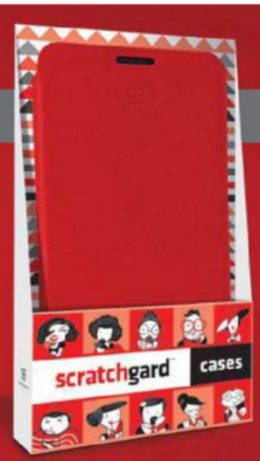

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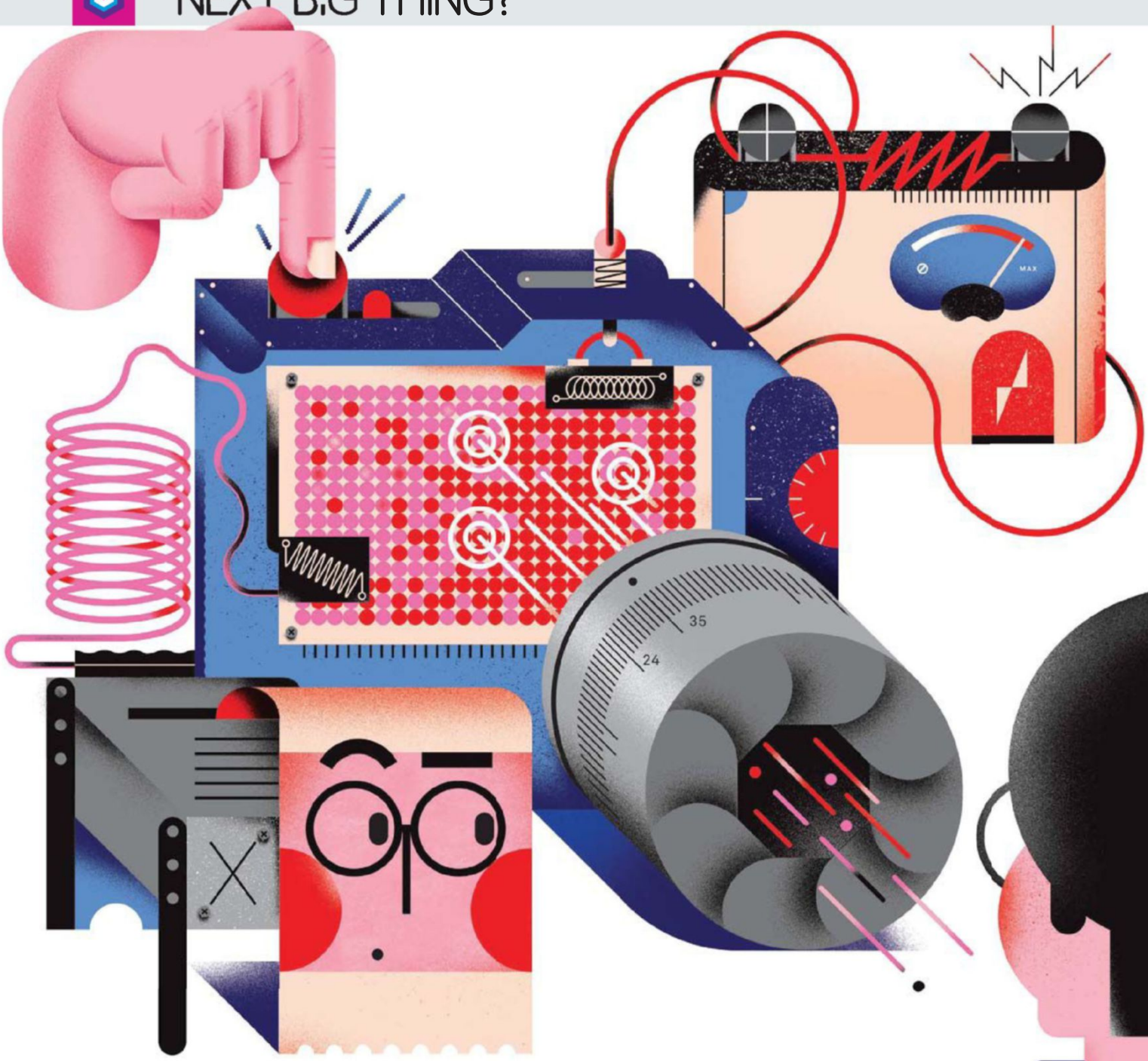

PERPETUAL MOTION PICTURES

You mean like *Van Helsing*? I'm pretty sure that only *seemed* to last forever.
It did. But, like the film *Van Helsing*, there are some things that should not be. Concepts that should trip the big fusebox in the sky and make the universe go dark. Like a mini wind turbine attached to the front of an electric bicycle... or the idea that if time travel will ever exist, then it already exists, and so must never have existed. Shudder. A team at Columbia University is dabbling in similarly dubious territory, by inventing a camera that is powered by what it captures.

If vanity was an energy source, humans would be in a lot less trouble right now.
Snarky species smackdown! No, not vanity, light. See, a camera sensor is made up of lots of photodiodes that turn light into an electrical signal; the camera's processor turns those signals into visual data. A solar panel, on the other hand, is made up of lots of photodiodes that turn light into electrical power. The Columbia Computer Vision Laboratory has built a video camera that flip-flops between photoconductive and photovoltaic modes so it can power its own image capture.

Holy continuous shooting! But to what end?
Well, it's not for the Annie Leibovitzes of this world. Not yet, anyway – the Columbia continuo-cam takes one tiny, 30x40-pixel frame per second. But simultaneous powering and shooting is just showing off, really: the sensor could just as easily send energy to a battery for use at night, meaning you could have a compact camera (or a CCTV setup) that never runs dry. Which might mean we can all take three-week holidays without needing an adapter, or it might mean a surveillance network that never blinks. Fingers crossed!

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